

Youth Gangs In Rhode Island

Perceptions Of Youth & Law Enforcement Agencies And Anti-Gang Strategies

August 2002

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Introduction

Legislation was enacted in Rhode Island in 1997 establishing a Gang Prevention Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to coordinate, review, propose, and oversee gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs throughout the state. These efforts are coordinated by the Rhode Island Justice Commission (RIJC), the state's criminal and juvenile justice planning agency. To assist with anti-gang planning, the RIJC commissioned a youth gang study with two primary components:

- 1) *Surveying of youth in selected cities and towns about their perceptions of gang activity in their communities and the impact of such activity on their lives; and*
- 2) *Surveying of law enforcement agencies about their perceptions of youth gang activity and about strategies being employed to combat gang activity.*

The five cities initially selected by the Justice Commission for attention were Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport.

These communities are commonly regarded as having the highest risk factors for children and youth in Rhode Island. For example, the five cities are identified by the Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook as having higher percentages of families with children below the poverty

The RIJC stated that the goal of this project was to “increase the knowledge of criminal justice practitioners with regard to gang incidence, intervention strategies, and enforcement and prosecution methods, including the point of view of youth.”

level than any other city or town in the state. In addition, Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport participate in another RIJC program: the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Offenders*, funded through the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The Rhode Island Justice Commission selected W. Bradley Crowther Consultants to conduct the youth gang study. Consistent with the RFP, Crowther Consultants proposed to:

1. *Conduct youth focus groups and surveys in Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport to obtain youth perceptions about gang activity and determine the impact of such activity on the lives of youth;*
2. *Survey Rhode Island law enforcement agencies to obtain their perceptions about youth gangs and to identify current anti-gang strategies being implemented; and*

3. *Review national research about effective anti-gang strategies to identify strategies that might be appropriate for Rhode Island.*

Once the project was underway, information from several sources suggested that youth gangs were becoming an increasing problem in Cranston, so that city was added to the list of communities targeted for youth focus groups and surveying.

This report presents results of the study. The contents are as follows:

- **Key Findings And Recommendations**
- **Rhode Island Law Enforcement Responses To The National Youth Gang Survey**
- **Law Enforcement Responses To A Rhode Island Survey About Youth Gangs**
- **Youth Perceptions Of youth Gangs And Their Impact**
- **Changes In Youth Attitudes Following A Gang Educational Presentation**
- **Comparison Of Law Enforcement And Youth Perceptions About Gangs**
- **Rhode Island Training School Youth Gang Survey**
- **Best National Practices In Anti-Gang Programming**

Crowther Consultants is grateful to a number of individuals and organizations whose assistance was instrumental in completing this project.

- **Peter Marshall** – *Who arranged and conducted youth focus groups and surveyed youth;*
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- **Gina M. Caruolo**, Rhode Island Justice Commission – *Who oversaw the project on behalf of the Justice Commission, provided guidance about the approach, assisted with surveying of law enforcement agencies, and analyzed law enforcement survey data;*
- **John Reis**, Crime Prevention Specialist, Rhode Island Department of the Attorney General – *Who provided valuable information about Rhode Island gangs, assisted with survey design and administration, and provided results of a Training School survey;*
- **National Youth Gang Center** – *Which provided guidance about design of the project and examples of surveys and focus groups used in other locales;*
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Apologies are extended to anyone whose name has inadvertently been omitted.

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Rhode Island Youth Gang Study: Key Findings & Recommendations

◆ INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Justice Commission (RIJC), the state's criminal and juvenile justice planning agency, commissioned a study of youth gangs conducted by W. Bradley Crowther Consultants. The study had a number of components including: (a) surveying of law enforcement agencies; (b) focus groups and surveying of youth in Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, where youth gang activity or the risk of youth gang activity was believed to be greatest; and (c) review of national research about effective anti-gang strategies. Major findings and recommendations from the study are presented here. More detailed information is contained in the full report.

◆ KEY FINDINGS

The following findings are derived from three primary sources:

- *A survey of law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Rhode Island;*
- *A survey of youth in the following six cities where youth gang activity is believed to be most prevalent: Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Woonsocket, Cranston, and Newport; and*
- *A survey of a sample of youth at the Rhode Island Training School, the state's only secure correctional facility for delinquent and criminal youth.*

Seriousness Of The Youth Gang Problem

- Twenty-eight of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies (84%) said youth gangs aren't much of or any problem in their communities, while five agencies (15%) said that youth gangs are a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem. In contrast, approximately half of 343 youth survey respondents (48%) said youth gangs are a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem, and approximately three out of ten youth respondents (31%) said youth gangs aren't much of or any problem. One likely reason for the differing perceptions among law enforcement and youth about the seriousness of youth gangs is that law enforcement agencies from throughout Rhode Island were surveyed, while youth surveyed were nearly all from six cities where youth gangs are thought to be most prevalent. It would be expected that many youth from the six high risk communities would perceive gangs as a problem, while law enforcement agencies from other communities would not regard youth gangs as particularly problematic.

How Many Youth Gangs & Gang Members Are Active?

- Six Rhode Island law enforcement agencies provided estimates of the number of active youth gangs and gang members in their communities. The estimated totals were 46 gangs and 1 389 youth gang members. The Rhode Island State Police, a statewide organization, was one agency that provided numbers, and it is likely that State Police estimates duplicate estimates supplied by local police departments.

Is It 'Cool' To Be In A Gang?

- Nearly seven out of ten youth surveyed (69%) said it is not cool to be in a gang. Only 7% said it is cool to be in a gang, and 24% said they are not sure. While it is encouraging that seven out of ten youth believe it is not cool to be in a gang, the fact that one out of four youth are undecided and might be swayed to believe gang membership is cool could be cause for concern.

Gang Membership & Trouble

- Three-quarters of youth surveyed (75%) said that being in a gang makes getting into trouble more likely. Fewer than one out of ten respondents (9%) said being in a gang does not increase the likelihood of getting into trouble. The remainder – 16% – were not sure.

Gang Members In Schools

- Slightly fewer than half of all youth surveyed (46%) said there are gang members in their school. Only 15% of responding youth said their school does not have gang members, while 36% were not sure. This does not necessarily mean that half of all schools attended by youth who were surveyed have gangs, because many youth answering “yes” to this question may attend the same school(s). Nor should these findings be generalized to all schools in Rhode Island, because the communities targeted for this study were those thought to be most likely to have youth gangs.

Fear Of Harm From Gangs At School

- More than four out of ten youth surveyed (44%) said they are not at all worried about being hurt at school by gangs, while 39% said they are very, somewhat, or a little worried that gangs at their school will hurt them.

Actions Taken Because Of Fear Of Gangs

- One out of four youth surveyed (25%) said they have not gone to certain areas of their community because of fear of gangs. In addition, 21% said they have not gone out at night, 15% said they have not walked in their neighborhood, and 12% said they have carried a weapon. While other preventive measures may represent prudent judgment, it is disturbing that 12% of surveyed youth said they have carried a weapon because of fear of gangs.

Friends Who Are Gang Members

- Nearly half of all youth surveyed (48%) said they have friends who are gang members. Approximately one-third (36%) said they do not have gang member friends, and 17% said they are not sure.

What Would Friends Think If A Youth Joined A Gang?

- Approximately three out of ten youth surveyed (29%) said that if they joined a gang their friends' thoughts about them wouldn't change. One out of four respondents (25%) said their friends would respect them less if they joined a gang, and about one out of ten (11%) said their friends would respect them more. More than one-third of youth (35%) were not sure what their friends would think if they joined a gang. While it is positive that only 11% of the

youth surveyed believed that the act of joining a gang would bring more respect from friends, it is troubling that only 25% of the youth believed that joining a gang would result in a loss of respect. This suggests that when deciding whether or not to join a gang, many youth would not be especially concerned about negative reactions from their friends.

Experience Of State Training School Youth With Gang Violence

- Nearly 40 percent of a sample of youth surveyed at the Rhode Island Training School, the state's only secure correctional facility for delinquent and criminal youth, said they have been physically injured by gang members. Comments by youth describing these incidents suggest that the injuries all occurred during street incidents, not during incarceration at the Training School. Comments also reflect a distressingly casual acceptance of violence, gunplay, and physical harm as routine parts of everyday life.

< *"...a kid tried to shoot me, but I pistol whipped him with my gun.... One kid hit me with a bat, but I only had a busted head. One of the kids got shot three times."*

< *"I reached under my seat for my gun, put it in the other person's face, and shot the gun. When I took off, the other gang members shot at me and put four bullets in the truck."*

What Do Gang Members Do?

- Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed agreed that among the most common activities youth gang members engage in are: (a) hanging out on the streets; (b) drinking beer; (c) doing drugs; and (d) selling drugs.

Reasons Why Youth Join Gangs

- Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed agreed that three of the primary reasons why youth join gangs are because: (a) friends are in the gang; (b) youth think being in a gang will provide protection; and (c) youth hang out with gang members and decide to join.

What Would Prevent Youth From Joining Gangs?

- Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed agreed that two strategies that might prevent youth from joining gangs are: (a) teaching youth how to solve problems without using violence; and (b) explaining the dangers of gangs to youth. Law enforcement and youth had different perspectives about other approaches. The gang prevention strategy most highly ranked by law enforcement agencies was more after-school, evening, and weekend activities, but that approach was ranked much lower by youth. Other strategies highly ranked by law enforcement but not by youth were providing adult mentors for kids in bad family situations and improving family life so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families. Gang prevention strategies ranked high by youth but not so high by law enforcement agencies include helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs and providing more jobs for kids. Interestingly, more police patrols and

surveillance to stop gang activity was the fifth most frequently selected strategy by youth, but only the eleventh most frequently selected strategy by law enforcement. The opposite might have been expected.

What Would Cause Youth To Quit Gangs?

- Law enforcement and youth surveyed agreed that two factors that might cause youth gang members to quit their gangs are: (a) advice/pressure from an adult the youth gang member respects; and (b) the youth gang member finding something positive s/he is good at. Law enforcement agencies also gave high rankings to getting older and losing interest in the gang, getting a job, and joining a sports or recreation program, but youth rankings of these factors were not so high. Youth gave higher rankings than law enforcement to hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs, advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend, and advice/pressure from a family member or other relative.

Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Their Community?

- Youth were more uncertain than law enforcement agencies about whether youth gangs do any good such as community service projects for their city or town. More than four out of ten (43%) youth respondents compared with approximately one-quarter of law enforcement agencies (24%) said they don't know whether youth gangs do any good for their community. No law enforcement agencies and only 6% of youth said that gangs do some good work, and approximately three-quarters of law enforcement agencies (76%)

and one-half of youth respondents (51%) said that youth gangs do not do any good for the community.

Law Enforcement Gang Units & Gang Training

- Seven (20%) of thirty-five Rhode Island law enforcement agencies responding to a survey indicated that they have gang units.
- Nineteen (58%) of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies said their personnel receive training about gang-related issues. The most frequently identified training strategies were attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops and reading printed material.

Identifying Youth As Gang Members As Part Of Intake Procedures

- Seventeen of thirty-four responding law enforcement agencies (50%) said that when they intake a youth, information is gathered about whether the youth is a member of a gang, and the other seventeen agencies said they do not obtain such information.

Anti-Gang Statutes, Ordinances, & Strategies

- Twenty-one responding law enforcement agencies said they do not specifically target any particular statutes or ordinances at youth gangs. Of those agencies that do target laws and ordinances at gangs, noise ordinances are employed by ten agencies, and truancy statutes and drinking in public ordinances are each used by seven agencies.

- Among Rhode Island law enforcement agencies using specific anti-youth gang strategies, strategies identified as most effective include directed patrol, confidential informants, and gang intelligence gathering.

Effect Of A Presentation About Gangs On Youth Attitudes & Beliefs

More than 80 youth, nearly all of whom were Southeast Asians between 11 and 16 years of age living in Providence, were surveyed twice: once before an educational presentation about gangs by a Crime Prevention Specialist from the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General and once immediately following the presentation. Pre-surveying occurred one to three weeks before the presentation, so undoubtedly some youth who completed pre-surveys did not attend the presentation and did not complete post-surveys, and undoubtedly some youth who attended the presentation and completed post-surveys had not completed pre-surveys. Because the surveys were anonymous without names or codes, it is not known how many youth completed both pre- and post-surveys and how many only completed one of the surveys. It is believed that most youth in the two groups were the same and that youth who were different were well-matched on characteristics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, neighborhoods, and schools. The pre- and post-surveys were administered by different persons (the post-surveys were administered by the person who made the presentation), so there may have been differences in survey administration that had an effect on responses. It is also possible that one reason for different responses between pre- and post-survey groups is

that there were more differences between youth in the two groups than is believed to be the case.

***Final Note:** In reviewing the following findings, it should be kept in mind that the gang educational presentation was a one-time event and the effects were measured immediately after the presentation. It is not known whether changes in attitudes and beliefs were sustained over time.*

- Following the youth gang educational presentation there was a decrease both in the percentage of youth who believe gangs are a really serious or somewhat of a problem (*from 56% for the pre-survey group to 51% for the post-survey group*), and also a decrease in the percentage of youth who believe gangs aren't much of a problem (*from 28% for the pre-survey group to 16% for the post-survey group*). The percentage of youth who said they don't know whether gangs are a problem jumped from 18% for pre-survey respondents to 33% for post-survey respondents. These responses suggest that the presentation caused participants to think about youth gangs in a different way than they had previously, perhaps challenging their beliefs and redefining terms, which created uncertainty.
- Youth opinions about whether it is cool to be in a gang changed significantly following the gang educational presentation. Prior to the presentation, 16% of the youth surveyed said yes it's cool to be in a gang and 46% said no it isn't. Following the presentation, only 2% of respondents said it's cool to be in a gang, while 77% said no it isn't. Apparently information provided during

the presentation caused a number of youth to change their minds and decide that being in a gang is not cool.

- Prior to the gang educational presentation, 12% of youth said their friends would respect them more if they joined a gang and 12% said their friends would respect them less. Following the presentation, the percentage of youth stating that joining a gang would cause their friends to respect them more dropped to 7%, and the percentage stating that their friends would respect them less climbed to 21%. This suggests that the presentation did convince some youth that joining a gang would not bring them more respect. Both before and after the presentation, approximately three-quarters of youth respondents said either that joining a gang wouldn't change what their friends thought of them or that they weren't sure whether friends' opinions would change. This suggests that for most youth, concern about friends' respect would not be a major factor in deciding whether or not to join a gang.
- Following the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth believing that being in a gang makes getting into trouble more likely jumped from 57% to 74%. This suggests that information provided during the presentation effectively convinced many youth that being in a gang could have negative consequences.
- After the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth believing that joining a gang brings more safety and protection decreased from 16% to 2%, while the percentage believing that it is safer not to join a gang

increased dramatically from 21% to 41%. These responses suggest that the presentation convinced many youth that they would be safer if they did not join a gang.

◆ **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Thorough Planning Of Gang Prevention & Reduction Efforts

- 1a. Communities wishing to initiate gang prevention and reduction efforts should first complete a thorough planning process that identifies the particular characteristics of the gang problem in their community and develops strategies specifically targeted at identified problems.

Communities and agencies should not “shop” for anti-gang programs popular in other places without first having logically determined what types of programs are most likely to be effective. Ideally, planning should be a collaborative process that engages all sectors of the community, including law enforcement agencies, schools, parents, human service agencies, citizens groups, minority groups, grassroots organizations, and youth.

- 1b. Communities undertaking anti-gang initiatives should establish clear, realistic objectives at the outset, and should evaluate the effectiveness of their initiative.

2. Coordinating Anti-Gang Planning With Other Initiatives

- 2a. Providence, Newport, Central Falls, Woonsocket, and Pawtucket should coordinate and integrate anti-gang planning and programming with activities occurring through the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious,*

Violent and Chronic Offenders project, which is sponsored by the Rhode Island Justice Commission; the Department of Children, Youth, and Families; and the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The planning process used by these five communities to develop their Comprehensive Strategies could be adapted for anti-gang planning, and some Comprehensive Strategy programs in the communities could be modified to specifically focus on youth gangs.

- 2b. Communities undertaking anti-gang initiatives should coordinate and integrate efforts with all related programs in the area. For example, Central Falls has an afterschool initiative called SCOPE, through which small grants are given to community agencies and teachers to offer a wide range of afterschool activities. A United Way program called *Community Schools Rhode Island* (CSRI) is establishing projects similar to SCOPE at middle schools in Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, and West Warwick. Should any of these communities determine, following a planning process, that afterschool anti-gang activities are a priority, SCOPE and CSRI could be vehicles to deliver such programming.

3. Gang Prevention Programs

(The goal of gang prevention programs is to keep youth from joining gangs. These programs can be targeted at the entire adolescent population or they can be targeted at youth believed to be at especially high risk for gang membership.)

- 3a. Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed as part of this study agreed that two related reasons why youth join gangs are because the youth have friends in the gang, and because the youth hang out with gang members and eventually decide to join. This suggests the need for programs that identify youth in the early stages of association with gang members and intervene before the youth actually joins the gang. Such programs should be collaborative, coordinated efforts of law enforcement agencies, schools, families, Family Court, juvenile probation, local Juvenile Hearing Boards, and social service agencies. Elements of the programs might include: increased awareness among law enforcement agencies and school personnel of youth beginning to associate with gangs, law enforcement and school notification to parents and legal guardians that their children are beginning to associate with gang members, and a range of interventions to disassociate the youth from the gang. These interventions could involve increased parental supervision and monitoring of their children's activities and friends, proactive police and school measures to steer youth away from gang associations, Family Court and Juvenile Hearing Board restrictions on whom youth under their jurisdictions associate with, education about the dangers of gangs, training to improve youth decision-making skills, and alternative opportunities to meet needs that caused the youth to begin to associate with gang members.
- 3b. Law enforcement agencies and youth who were surveyed agreed that one way to prevent youth from joining gangs is to teach them how to solve

problems without using violence. Non-violent dispute resolution has received considerable emphasis in recent years, and this emphasis should continue.

- 3c. Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed agreed that one way to prevent youth from joining gangs is through education about the nature of gangs and the dangers and risks of gang involvement. One component of this study was a comparison of youth attitudes and beliefs before and after a gang education presentation by the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General. Immediately following the presentation, youth's attitudes toward and beliefs about gangs were more negative than they had been prior to the presentation. However, it is not known whether those attitudes and beliefs were sustained over time, or whether the new attitudes and beliefs deterred youth from associating with gang members and joining gangs. Research in areas such as delinquency and substance abuse suggests that to be maximally effective, education should be ongoing rather than limited to one session, and should be combined with other strategies such as skill-building, counseling, and alternative activities. Future anti-gang education programs in Rhode Island should strive for a sustained and comprehensive approach consistent with research.
- 3d. Communities and agencies wishing to implement gang prevention programs should consider the following models, which have had positive evaluation results:

- < Reparenting (adults who act as parents) and creation of a family atmosphere (*House of Umoja in Philadelphia is an example*);
- < Targeting disruptive children in early childhood and training them in social skills and self-control (*Montreal Preventive Treatment Program is an example*);
- < Comprehensive programming for middle school students including individual and group counseling, positive alternatives, role models, gang prevention curriculum, and weekend experiences (*Se Puede is an example*);
- < Neighborhood support and assistance for parents combined with school programming and follow-up (*G.R.I.P. is an example*);
- < Anti-gang school curriculum (*G.R.E.A.T. is an example*);
- < Youth development and positive alternatives combined with individualized case management and collaborative outreach to and referrals from courts, police, schools, and other agencies (*Boys & Girls Clubs national Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach program is an example*);

4. **Gang Intervention Programs**

(Intervention programs are targeted at existing gangs and gang members. Their goals are to reduce the level of criminal behavior by gangs and to have youth quit gangs. Intervention programs usually have a social service focus rather than an arrest and prosecution focus.)

- 4a. Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed for this study indicated that advice/pressure from an adult whom a gang member respects is one factor that might help convince the member to quit the gang. In addition, youth surveyed said that advice/pressure from a family member or other relative could have the same effect. This suggests the need for intervention programs that provide adult mentors for identified youth gang members and strengthen capacities of family members to influence their children to quit gangs. Such programs could be collaborative efforts of organizations such as law enforcement agencies, schools, social service agencies, probation, and Family Court.
- 4b. Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed agreed that gang members might quit their gangs if they found something positive they were good at (e.g., music, art, or another avocation or vocation). Gang members are often youth who have been unsuccessful in school and other legitimate pursuits, and who therefore have sought esteem and respect through deviant activities with like-minded peers. Intervention programs that help gang members identify and develop talents in positive areas that bring satisfaction and self-esteem could meet needs previously met through gang participation and pull youth away from gangs. Such programs could be collaborative efforts of organizations such as law enforcement agencies, schools, social service agencies, probation, and Family Court.

- 4c. Communities and agencies wishing to implement gang intervention programs should consider the following models, which have had positive evaluation results:
- < Night-time crisis intervention teams in areas prone to gang activity, with involvement of neighborhood groups and juvenile justice agencies *(Chicago Crisis Intervention Services Project is an example);*
 - < Individualized needs assessments and service delivery for gang members coordinated by a team including parents, police, schools, probation officers, and community-based agencies *(Boys & Girls Clubs Comin' Up project in Fort Worth, Texas is an example);*
 - < Job training and employment for youth gang members *(Homeboy Industries & Jobs For A Future in Los Angeles, California are examples);*
 - < Assistance to youth from fatherless homes by adult workers who provide reparenting, mentoring, job training, and social development *(Violence-Free-Zones developed by the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) is an example);*
 - < Anger management training, interpersonal skills training, and gang awareness education for youth in juvenile correctional facilities *(Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Model in Brooklyn, New York is an example);*
 - < Community aftercare services for gang members released from juvenile correctional facilities *(Lifeskills '95 Aftercare Program in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California is an example).*
-

5. Gang Suppression Programs

(Like intervention programs, suppression programs are targeted at existing gangs. The difference is that while intervention programs provide services to gang members, suppression programs are characterized by a criminal justice system response through arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.)

5a. Communities and agencies wishing to implement gang suppression programs should consider the following models, which have had positive evaluation results:

- < Installation of traffic barriers in areas with high gang activity to reduce the number of entrances and exits, thus making crimes such as drive-by shootings more difficult *(Los Angeles Police Department's Operation Cul-De-Sac is an example);*
- < Teams investigating the most active gangs and combining arrests with prosecution and intensive probation supervision *(Operation Safe Streets in Los Angeles is an example);*
- < Geomapping, computerized databases, and offender tracking targeted at youth gangs *(Orange County, California program is an example);*

6. Protection From Youth Gangs

6a. Law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed as part of this study agreed that one of the primary reasons youth join gangs is for protection. Nearly four out of ten youth surveyed said they are very, somewhat, or a little worried that gangs at their school will harm them. Youth also indicated that there is a need for more police patrols and surveillance to stop gang

activity. This suggests that programs should be developed in communities and schools to provide youth with more protection and reduce fear. These programs could include components such as an increased police presence in high-risk areas at high-risk times, community patrols to report suspicious and dangerous activity, increased school security, and “safe zones” – houses and other places in the community where youth can go if they believe they are in danger.

7. Youth Gangs & Weapons

- 7a. Twelve percent of youth surveyed said they have carried a weapon because of fear of gangs. In addition, quotations from youth at the Rhode Island Training School about their experiences with gang violence suggest that many gang members routinely carry weapons and are not reluctant to use them. Reducing gun violence has been a priority of the criminal justice system and community groups in recent years, but clearly more needs to be done. Comprehensive strategies should be developed that include education, non-violent dispute resolution, early intervention, and enforcement. These strategies should be collaborative efforts involving youth, families, schools, law enforcement agencies, youth and family service agencies, Family Court, probation, and health and mental health professionals.

8. Law Enforcement Training

- 8a. Fourteen of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies said their personnel do not receive training about gang-related issues. Most if not all of these agencies are probably in communities where youth gangs are not currently a problem. However, because of Rhode Island's small geographical area, youth travel regularly between communities, and it is possible that youth gang activity will spread to additional cities and towns. Therefore, it is recommended that all law enforcement agencies in the state receive youth gang training. The Rhode Island Department of Attorney General currently offers training of this type. The Department of Attorney General and the Rhode Island Justice Commission should collaborate to determine whether there are agencies that have not received training and whether there are additional training topics that should be offered. A statewide training plan should then be developed and implemented.

9. Identifying Youth As Gang Members During Juvenile Justice System Intake

- 9a. One-half of responding law enforcement agencies indicated that when they intake a youth (e.g., make an arrest), they do not attempt to determine or record whether the youth is a member of a gang. This information is very useful for purposes such as determining the nature and magnitude of youth gang problems and developing and implementing anti-gang strategies targeted at particular individuals. Therefore, it is recommended

that all law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies institute procedures to gather and record information about whether youth who become involved in the system are gang members.

10. Rhode Island Justice Commission Follow-Up Actions

(This youth gang study was conducted for the Rhode Island Justice Commission (RIJC), the state's criminal and juvenile justice planning agency. Following are actions the RIJC might take to address findings and recommendations of the study.)

- 10a. The RIJC could provide funding and technical assistance for one or more of the communities targeted by this youth gang study (*Central Falls, Cranston, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket*) to undertake a planning process that analyzes the magnitude and nature of the youth gang problem in their community and develops a comprehensive anti-gang approach including prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies. All of these cities except Cranston participate in a related RIJC project: *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Offenders* and have experience with collaborative juvenile justice planning. Data and program research in this study could be used by communities for youth gang planning. The RIJC could also provide funding to help implement strategies that are developed through the community planning process.
- 10b. The RIJC could use one or more of its grant programs (*e.g., Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act*) to fund specific youth gang

prevention, intervention, and/or suppression programs recommended by this study.

- 10c. The RIJC could play a coordinating role in bringing together law enforcement agencies, citizen groups, social service agencies, schools, Family Court, juvenile probation, and others to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce use of guns and other weapons by youth gang members, and to reduce the carrying of guns and other weapons by other youth who are afraid of being harmed by gangs.
- 10d. The RIJC could provide funding and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies to develop computerized gang tracking and geo-mapping systems.
- 10e. The RIJC could play a coordinating role in bringing together other funding sources such as the State Division of Substance Abuse, the Department of Health, United Way, and the Rhode Island Foundation to discuss how their funds might be coordinated with RIJC grant funds to address youth gang issues.

Rhode Island Law Enforcement Responses To The National Youth Gang Center Survey

The National Youth Gang Center (NYGC), which was created in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, conducts an annual survey of a sample of law enforcement agencies nationwide. The purpose of the survey is to determine the level and type of youth gang activity. Following are Rhode Island law enforcement agencies that were surveyed by the National Youth Gang Center in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999.

- *Coventry Police Department*
- *Cranston Police Department*
- *Cumberland Police Department*
- *East Providence Police Department*
- *Johnston Police Department*
- *North Providence Police Department*
- *Pawtucket Police Department*
- *Providence Police Department*
- *South Kingstown Police Department*
- *Warwick Police Department*
- *West Warwick Police Department*
- *Woonsocket Police Department*

(Not all of these police departments responded to the survey in all years.)

For the National Youth Gang surveys, a youth gang is defined as a group of youth or young adults in the law enforcement agency's jurisdiction that responsible persons in the agency or in the community are willing to identify or classify as a gang. Motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, and gangs with all adults are excluded from the National Youth Gang surveys.

The Rhode Island Justice Commission analyzed responses to the National Youth Gang survey from Rhode Island law enforcement agencies for 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999. Following are selected results.

Table 1: Are Youth Gangs Present In Your Community? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1996-1999				
<i>Community</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Coventry	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Response
Cranston	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cumberland	Don't Know	No	No	No Response
East Providence	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Johnston	No	No	No	No
North Providence	No Response	Yes	No Response	No Response
Pawtucket	No Response	No	No	No
Providence	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Response
South Kingstown	No	No	No	No
Warwick	No	No	No	No
West Warwick	Yes	No	Yes	No
Woonsocket	Yes	No Response	No	No Response
Note: "No Response" may either mean that the police department did not return the survey or that the department returned the survey but did not respond to this question.				

Table 1 above shows that seven of the twelve Rhode Island police departments surveyed by the National Youth Gang Center indicated that youth gangs were present in their community in at least one year between 1996 and 1999.

- *Cranston said youth gangs were present in all four years.*
- *Providence said youth gangs were present in 1996, 1997, and 1998, but did not respond in 1999.*
- *Coventry also said youth gangs were present in 1996, 1997, and 1998, but did not respond in 1999.*
- *East Providence said youth gangs were present in 1996, 1997, and 1998, but not in 1999.*
- *North Providence said youth gangs were present in 1997, but did not respond in the other three years.*
- *West Warwick said youth gangs were present in 1998 but not in any of the other three years.*
- *Woonsocket said youth gangs were present in 1996 but not present in 1998, and did not respond in 1997 and 1999.*

Variations in police reporting of the presence or absence of gangs from year to year may result from different individuals within the department completing the surveys in different years, and/or from changes in the department's definition of a gang.

Table 2: How Many Youth Gangs Are Present In Your Community? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1996-1999				
<i>Community</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Coventry	5	6	5	No Response
Cranston	2	3	2	3
Cumberland	Don't Know	0	0	No Response
East Providence	3	1	5	0
Johnston	0	0	0	0
North Providence	No Response	Don't Know	No Response	No Response
Pawtucket	No Response	0	0	0
Providence	No Response	25	25	No Response
South Kingstown	0	0	0	0
Warwick	0	0	0	0
West Warwick	5	0	1	0
Woonsocket	6	No Response	0	No Response
Note: "No Response" may either mean that the police department did not return the survey or that the department returned the survey but did not respond to this question.				

Table 2 above provides police department assessments of the number of youth gangs in their communities in 1996 through 1999.

- *Not surprisingly, the highest estimates came from the state's largest city, Providence, which reported that there were twenty-five youth gangs in the city in both 1997 and 1998.*
- *Coventry reported five gangs in 1996 and 1999 and six gangs in 1997.*
- *Cranston reported two gangs in 1996 and 1999 and three gangs in 1997 and 1999.*
- *East Providence reported three gangs in 1996, one gang in 1997, five gangs in 1998, but no gangs in 1999.*
- *West Warwick reported five gangs in 1996, one gang in 1998, and no gangs in 1997 or 1999.*
- *Woonsocket reported six gangs in 1996 and none in 1998.*

Estimates of the number of gangs in a community from year to year may be affected by changing definitions within the police department of what constitutes a gang, and by having different individuals in the police department complete the survey in different years.

Table 3: What Is The Estimated Degree Of Youth Gang Involvement In Crimes? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1996-1999						
Community	Year	Aggravated Assault	Robbery	B/E and/or Burglary	Motor Vehicle Theft	Larceny
Coventry	1996	Low	Not Involved	Not Involved	Not Involved	Low
	1997	Medium	Not Involved	Low	Not Involved	Low
	1998	Few	None	None	None	None
Cranston	1996	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	1997	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	1998	Few	Few	Few	None	None
	1999	Some	None	Some	Some	Some
East Providence	1996	Medium	-	-	Low	Low
	1997	Medium	Not Involved	Low	High	Medium
	1997	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
North Providence	1997	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Providence	1996	High	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	1997	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	1998	Some	Few	Few	Some	Some
West Warwick	1996	Medium	Not Involved	Not Involved	Medium	Medium
Woonsocket	1996	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 3 above presents police department estimates of the degree of involvement of youth gangs in various serious crimes. Where a year is not listed for a city, no estimates were provided by the police department.

- *Over the four year period 1996-1999, aggravated assault was the crime most often identified by police departments as having high or medium involvement from youth gangs. However, the “high” and “medium” ratings occurred for 1996 and 1997. Only Cranston provided any responses for 1999.*
- *Motor vehicle theft and larceny also received a number of “medium” and “high” ratings, though, like aggravated assault, these ratings were for 1996 and 1997.*

- *A few responding police departments indicated that there was medium involvement of youth gangs in breaking and entering and burglary, and other departments perceived low involvement.*
- *Police departments generally did not believe that there was much involvement of youth gangs in robberies in their communities.*

Table 4: What Is The Estimated Number Of Gang Members In Your Community? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1998	
<i>Community</i>	<i>Number Of Gang Members</i>
Cranston	30
East Providence	50
Providence	1500
West Warwick	6

Table 4 above provides estimates of the number of gang members in communities that responded to this question on the National Youth Gang Center's 1998 survey.

- *The Providence Police Department estimated that there were 1500 youth gang members in that city in 1998.*
- *East Providence estimated 50 youth gang members in 1998; Cranston estimated 30 gang members; and West Warwick estimated 6 gang members.*

Table 5: What Is The Race/Ethnicity Of Gang Members In Your Community? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1998					
<i>Community</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>
Coventry	0	0	95	5	0
Cranston	0	10	3	87	0
East Providence	20	25	5	50	0
Providence	25	30	10	34	Amer. Indian
West Warwick	15	10	75	0	0

Table 5 above displays information about police perceptions of the race and ethnicity of youth gang members in their communities in 1998.

- *Cranston indicated that nearly 90% of youth gang members were Asian.*

- *East Providence indicated that approximately half of its youth gang members were Asian, with Hispanics and African Americans making up most of the other half.*
- *Providence indicated that approximately one-third of youth gang members were Asian, slightly fewer Hispanic, one-quarter African American, and one-tenth white.*
- *West Warwick indicated that three-quarters of youth gang members were white, and that African Americans and Hispanics made up the remaining one-quarter.*
- *Coventry indicated that virtually all youth gang members were white, with Asians accounting for the remainder.*

Table 6: How Often Did Youth Gang Members Use Firearms In Assaultive Crimes? RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1998				
Community	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not Used
Coventry				Y
Cranston			Y	
East Providence			Y	
Providence		Y		
West Warwick		Y		

Table 7 above provides police perceptions regarding the frequency of use of firearms by youth gang members in assaultive crimes in 1998.

- *None of the responding police departments stated that firearms were used often in assaultive crimes by youth gang members.*
- *Two of the five responding departments, Providence and West Warwick, said youth gang members sometimes used firearms in assaultive crimes.*
- *Two of the five responding departments, Cranston and East Providence, said firearms were rarely used in assaultive crimes by youth gang members.*
- *One department, Coventry, said youth gang members did not use firearms in assaultive crimes.*

**Table 7: What Is The Level Of Youth Gang Involvement In Drug Crime?
RI Police Departments Surveyed By The National Youth Gang Center, 1998**

<i>Community</i>	<i>What Is The Degree Of Youth Gang Involvement In Drug Sales?</i>	<i>What Percentage Of Youth Gangs Are Organized As Drug Gangs?</i>
Coventry	Few	2%
Cranston	Few	50%
East Providence	Some	100%
Providence	Some	0%
West Warwick	No Answer	0%

Table 7 above presents police observations about youth gang involvement in drug crime in 1998.

- *East Providence and Providence indicated that there was some involvement of youth gangs in drug sales in their communities.*
- *Coventry and Cranston said few youth gang members were involved in drug sales.*
- *East Providence indicated that all of the youth gangs in that city were specifically organized as drug gangs.*
- *Cranston said that about half of its youth gangs were organized as drug gangs.*
- *Coventry said almost none of its youth gangs were organized as drug gangs, and Providence and West Warwick said none of their youth gangs were drug gangs.*

Summary Of Findings

1. Seven of the twelve Rhode Island police departments surveyed by the National Youth Gang Center indicated that youth gangs were present in their community in at least one year between 1996 and 1999.
2. The Providence Police Department estimated that there were 25 youth gangs in the Capital City in 1997 and 1998. No estimate was provided in 1996 or 1999.
3. The Coventry, Cranston, East Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket Police Departments each reported that there were multiple gangs in their cities in at least one year between 1996 and 1999.
4. Over the four year period 1996-1999, aggravated assault was the crime most often identified by police departments as having high or medium involvement from youth gangs.

5. The Providence Police Department estimated that there were approximately 1500 youth gang members in that city in 1998. No other responding police department reported more than 50 youth gang members.
6. Three of five responding police departments said that in 1998 more youth gang members came from the Asian community than from any other racial or ethnic group.
7. None of the responding police departments stated that firearms were used often in assaultive crimes by youth gang members.
8. Two responding police departments said there was some involvement of youth gangs in drug sales, and two departments said few gang members were involved in drug sales.
9. Three responding police departments stated that none or almost none of its youth gangs were specifically organized as drug gangs; one department said all of its youth gangs were drug gangs; and one department said about half of its youth gangs were drug gangs.

Law Enforcement Responses To A Rhode Island Survey About Youth Gangs

To supplement information available from the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC), a Rhode Island law enforcement survey was developed for this study. The NYG provided copies of survey instruments from other jurisdictions, which were used as models. Forty-one Rhode Island law enforcement agencies were surveyed, including all local police departments; the State Police; the Department of Corrections; and the Department of Children, Youth and Families. Table 8 below lists the thirty-five agencies that responded.

For purposes of the law enforcement survey, a youth gang was defined as an organization of three or more juveniles who have a common identifying name, symbol, or colors, and who have common interests that include committing criminal and delinquent acts.

Table 8: Law Enforcement Agencies Responding To 2001 Rhode Island Youth Gang Survey

• Barrington Police Department	• North Kingstown Police Department
• Burrillville Police Department	• North Providence Police Department
• Central Falls Police Department	• North Smithfield Police Department
• Charleston Police Department	• Pawtucket Police Department
• Coventry Police Department	• Providence Police Department
• Cranston Police Department	• Richmond Police Department
• Cumberland Police Department	• Scituate Police Department
• East Providence Police Department	• Smithfield Police Department
• Foster Police Department	• South Kingstown Police Department
• Glocester Police Department	• Tiverton Police Department
• Hopkinton Police Department	• Warwick Police Department
• Jamestown Police Department	• West Warwick Police Department
• Johnston Police Department	• Westerly Police Department
• Lincoln Police Department	• Woonsocket Police Department
• Little Compton Police Department	• Rhode Island State Police
• Middletown Police Department	• Rhode Island Department of Corrections
• Narragansett Police Department	• Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families
• Newport Police Department	

Of the thirty-five agencies responding to the survey, seven (20%) indicated that they have gang units. Five of those seven provided the number of full-time personnel assigned to the unit. That information is shown below in Table 9.

Table 9: Rhode Island Law Enforcement Agencies With Gang Units		
<i>Agency</i>	<i>Have A Gang Unit</i>	<i>Number Of Full-Time Personnel Assigned To Gang Unit</i>
Cranston Police Department ¹	Yes	1 Full-Time Person
North Providence Police Department	Yes	-
Pawtucket Police Department	Yes	-
Providence Police Department ²	Yes	2 Full-Time Persons
RI State Police ³	Yes	2 Full-Time Persons
RI Department of Children, Youth & Families ⁴	Yes	6 Full-Time Persons
RI Department of Corrections ⁵	Yes	7 Full-Time Persons

¹ *The Cranston Police Department reported that one full-time person is assigned to gangs, primarily to perform gang intelligence.*

² *The Providence Police Department reported that two persons are assigned full-time to a gang unit. Their responsibilities include gang prevention, gang intelligence, gang enforcement, and gang prosecution.*

³ *The State Police reported that two persons are assigned to a gang unit. These individuals are part of a six-person Intelligence Unit, and they are specifically responsible for gang intelligence, gang enforcement, and training other members of the State Police about gangs.*

⁴ *The Department of Children, Youth and Families, which reported six staff assigned to a gang unit, answered both “Yes” and “No” to the question of whether the Department has a gang unit. By “Yes,” DCYF meant that the six staff are assigned to Safe Streets Providence, a program that provides intensive monitoring to high risk youth on probation. By “No,” DCYF meant that Safe Streets Providence is targeted at high risk non-gang members as well as gang members.*

⁵ *The Department of Corrections reported that seven staff are assigned to a gang unit. The DOC indicated that these persons make up an investigation Unit, which performs other functions in addition to gang prevention, gang intelligence, and gang enforcement.*

Table 10: Do Personnel In Your Agency Receive Training About Gang-Related Issues?		
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
19 (58%)	14 (42%)	33 (100%)

Table 10 above shows that nineteen (58%) of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies said their personnel receive training about gang-related issues.

Table 11: How Do Personnel In Your Agency Learn New Methods For Dealing With Youth Gangs?	
• Attendance at conferences, seminars, workshops	21 (81%)
• Reading printed materials	21 (81%)
• Visits to other agencies	11 (42%)
• Video or audio tapes	11 (42%)
• Presentations by other agencies visiting your agency	8 (31%)
• University courses	5 (19%)
• Multi-agency youth gang task force meetings	4 (15%)
• Presentations by your agency's gang experts to other personnel in your agency	3 (12%)
• Electronic information sharing with other law enforcement agencies	1 (4%)
* Percentages based on 26 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Table 11 above reveals that Rhode Island law enforcement agencies rely on a variety of techniques to learn new methods for dealing with youth gangs.

- *Attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops and reading printed materials were the most frequently identified means of learning new gang interventions, with twenty-one responding agencies indicating that they use these methods.*
- *Other frequently identified means of learning new gang interventions were visits to other agencies and video or audio tapes, with each of these learning methods being used by eleven responding agencies.*

Table 12: With Whom Does Your Agency Collaborate To Address Youth Gang Issues?	
• Other law enforcement agencies	19 (56%)
• Local schools	12 (35%)
• Housing Authority	4 (1%)
• Social service agencies	3 (9%)

Table 12: With Whom Does Your Agency Collaborate To Address Youth Gang Issues?	
• Colleges/universities	2 (6%)
• Citizens' groups	1 (3%)
• Attorney General	1 (3%)
• Department of Corrections	1 (3%)
• New England State Police Information Network (NESPIN)	1 (3%)
• Do not collaborate with other organizations on gang issues	14 (41%)
* Percentages based on 34 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Table 12 indicates that:

- *Nineteen responding agencies said they collaborate with other law enforcement organizations to address youth gang issues;*
- *Twelve agencies said they collaborate with local schools; and*
- *Fourteen agencies said they do not collaborate with other organizations on gang issues.*

Table 13: Are There State Laws Or Local Ordinances That Are Used To Control Youth Gangs?	
• No particular laws or ordinances are specifically targeted at youth gangs	21 (62%)
• Noise ordinance	10 (29%)
• Drinking in public	7 (21%)
• Truancy	7 (21%)
• Graffiti	4 (12%)
• Public nuisance	4 (12%)
• Anti-loitering	3 (9%)
• Local curfew	2 (6%)
• Anti-gang law/ordinance	1 (3%)
• Trespassing	1 (3%)
• Violation of probation	1 (3%)
* Percentages based on 34 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

As displayed in Table 13 above, twenty-one Rhode Island law enforcement agencies that returned surveys indicated that they do not specifically target any particular statutes or ordinances at youth gangs. In communities where statutes and ordinances are targeted at gangs:

- *Ten agencies said they use noise ordinances to combat youth gangs.*
- *Seven agencies said they use truancy statutes, and seven agencies said they use drinking in public ordinances to control gangs.*

Table 14: What Strategies Are Used For The Specific Purpose Of Combating Youth Gangs?	
• No particular strategies have been used to combat youth gangs	20 (61%)
• Directed patrol	7 (21%)
• Gang intelligence gathering	7 (21%)
• Confidential informants	6 (18%)
• Police-community meetings	5 (15%)
• Multi-agency coordination	4 (12%)
• Citizen crime watches	3 (9%)
• Foot patrol	3 (9%)
• Gang surveillance	3 (9%)
• Gang prevention/early intervention	3 (9%)
• Satellite police stations	2 (6%)
• Engaging gangs in positive activities	2 (6%)
• Targeting youth gang leaders	2 (6%)
• Bike patrol	1 (3%)
• Direct interrogations	1 (3%)
• Safe Streets Providence Probation Unit	1 (3%)
• Youth sports for gang members (football)	1 (3%)
• Gang sweeps	0
• Gang infiltration	0
* Percentages based on 33 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Twenty responding law enforcement agencies indicated that they do not use any particular strategies to combat youth gangs. Agencies that do use particular strategies employ a variety of approaches:

- *Seven agencies said they use directed patrol, and seven agencies said they gather gang intelligence.*
- *Six agencies said they obtain information about gangs from confidential informants.*
- *Five agencies said they participate in police-community meetings to address youth gang issues.*
- *Four agencies said they use multi-agency coordination to combat youth gangs.*

Table 15: What Three Anti-Youth Gang Strategies Do You Believe Have Been Most Effective?

<i>First Most Effective</i>	<i>Second Most Effective</i>	<i>Third Most Effective</i>
Directed Patrol (3)	Gang Surveillance (2)	Multi-Agency Coordination (2)
Community Meeting (1)	Foot Patrol (1)	Directed Patrol (1)
Confidential Informants (1)	Confidential Informants (1)	Confidential Informants (1)
Gang Intelligence Gathering (1)	Gang Intelligence Gathering (1)	Gang Intelligence Gathering (1)
Gang Prevention/Intervention (1)	Police-Community Meetings (1)	Talking to Parents (1)
Safe Streets Providence (1)	Citizen Crime Watch (1)	Tattoo Removal Program (1)
	SWOOP Football League (1)	
NOTE: The number in parentheses is the number of agencies selecting that strategy.		

Table 15 displays those anti-gang strategies that law enforcement agencies believe have been most effective.

- *Directed patrol was identified by three agencies as their most effective strategy, and identified by one agency as the third most effective strategy.*
- *Use of confidential informants and gang intelligence gathering each received one selection for most effective strategy, one selection for second most effective strategy, and one selection for third most effective strategy.*

Table 16: When Your Agency Intakes A Youth, Is Information Gathered About Whether The Youth Is A Member Of A Gang?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
17 (50%)	17 (50%)	34 (100%)

As Table 16 indicates, seventeen (50%) of thirty-four responding law enforcement agencies said that when they intake (e.g., arrest) a youth, information is gathered about whether the youth is a member of a gang. The same number and percentage of agencies said they do not obtain information about whether the youth is a gang member.

Table 17: How Many Youth Gangs Are Currently Active In Your Community, And How Many Active Gang Members Are There In Your Community?

<i>Responding Agency</i>	<i>Estimated Number Of Youth Gangs</i>	<i>Estimated Number Of Active Gang Members</i>
Central Falls Police Department	5	50
Coventry Police Department	1	9

Table 17: How Many Youth Gangs Are Currently Active In Your Community, And How Many Active Gang Members Are There In Your Community?		
<i>Responding Agency</i>	<i>Estimated Number Of Youth Gangs</i>	<i>Estimated Number Of Active Gang Members</i>
Cranston Police Department	3	30
Newport Police Department	2	-
Providence Police Department	20	1000
Rhode Island State Police	15	300
TOTAL	46 ¹	1389 ²
¹ The estimated total of 46 youth gangs does not mean that there are 46 different gangs in the responding communities. It is possible that some of these are branches of the same gangs in different communities		
² Since the State Police is a statewide organization, it is possible that some or all of the 300 youth gang members estimated by the State Police duplicate estimates in other communities, which would reduce the total estimate to something less than 1389.		

Six Rhode Island law enforcement agencies provided estimates of the number of active youth gangs and gang members in their communities. This information is shown in Table 17 above. The estimated totals were forty-six gangs and 1389 youth gang members. The Rhode Island State Police, a statewide organization, was one agency that provided numbers, and it is likely that State Police estimates duplicate estimates supplied by local police departments.

Table 18: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>	<i>% Yes</i>
Youth gangs aren't any problem around here	15	45%
Youth gangs aren't much of a problem around here	13	39%
Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem around here	4	12%
Youth gangs are a really serious problem around here	1	3%
I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem in my community	0	0%
TOTAL	33	100%
* Percentages based on 33 agencies providing responses.		

Thirty-three law enforcement agencies provided responses to a question about the seriousness of youth gang problems in their community. Table 18 reveals that:

- Fifteen agencies (45%) said youth gangs aren't any problem.
- Thirteen agencies (39%) said youth gangs aren't much of a problem.
- Five agencies (15%) said youth gangs are a really serious or somewhat serious problem in their communities.

Table 19: Which Of The Following Ways Help You Tell That Someone In Your Community Belongs To A Gang?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs	26 (87%)
Gang signs, symbols, or graffiti, such as on books, jackets, or papers	22 (73%)
Kids tell you they belong to a gang	21 (70%)
Gang colors on kids' clothes, jewelry, or hair	15 (50%)
Gang tattoos on kids' bodies	15 (50%)
Gang initiations for new members at school or other places	9 (30%)
Gang handshakes or hand signals that kids use	9 (30%)
Different language, words, or phrases that kids in gangs use	8 (27%)
A family will tell that a kid belongs to a gang	1 (3%)
I don't know how to tell whether kids belong to gangs	0
* Percentages based on 30 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

As shown in Table 19, Rhode Island law enforcement agencies identified a variety of methods for determining whether a youth belongs to a gang:

- *Twenty-six agencies said word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs.*
- *Twenty-two agencies said kids in gangs are recognizable from gang signs, symbols, or graffiti, such as on books, jackets, or papers.*
- *Twenty-one agencies said kids tell you they belong to a gang.*
- *Fifteen agencies said kids in gangs are recognizable by gang colors on clothes, jewelry, or hair.*
- *Fifteen agencies said kids in gangs are recognizable by tattoos.*

Table 20: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Some kids join because their friends are in the gang	18 (67%)
Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere	18 (67%)
Some kids think being in a gang will protect them from other gangs and people	17 (63%)
Some kids think they will be more important if they join a gang	17 (63%)
Some kids start hanging out with gang members and decide to join	16 (59%)
Some kids think being in a youth gang is exciting	14 (52%)

Table 20: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Some kids think joining a gang will be like joining a happy family	14 (52%)
Some kids think being in a gang will cause other people to respect them more	13 (48%)
Some kids think they will get more money, drugs, or other things in a gang	12 (44%)
Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like a useful person	9 (33%)
Youth gangs recruit members	8 (30%)
Youth gangs pressure kids to join	8 (30%)
Some kids join because their sisters or brothers are in a gang	7 (26%)
Some guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang	7 (26%)
Some girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang	4 (15%)
I don't know why kids join gangs	2 (7%)
A kid may be missing something and will join a gang to gain something	1 (4%)
* Percentages based on 27 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Table 20 lists reasons selected by Rhode Island law enforcement agencies to explain why youth join gangs:

- *Eighteen agencies said some kids join gangs because their friends are in the gang.*
- *Eighteen agencies said some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere.*
- *Seventeen agencies said some kids think being in a gang will protect them from other gangs and people.*
- *Seventeen agencies said some kids think they will be more important if they join a gang.*
- *Sixteen agencies said some kids start hanging out with gang members and decide to join.*
- *Fourteen agencies said some kids think joining a gang will be like joining a happy family.*
- *Thirteen agencies said some kids think being in a gang will cause other people to respect them more.*
- *Twelve agencies said some kids think they will get more money, drugs, or other things in a gang.*

Table 21: Which Of The Following Activities Do You Think Youth Gang Members In Your Community Do Together?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Hang out on the streets	18 (62%)
Drink beer	16 (55%)
Do drugs	16 (55%)
Do graffiti	16 (55%)
Sell drugs	15 (52%)
Go to parties	15 (52%)
Do vandalism	14 (48%)
Cruise	12 (41%)
Look for girls	11 (38%)
Fight with other gangs & other people	8 (28%)
Hang out at malls	6 (21%)
Steal cars	6 (21%)
Break into houses	6 (21%)
Steal from stores	6 (21%)
Rob people	5 (17%)
Play sports	5 (17%)
Do community service projects	1 (3%)
I don't know what youth gang members do	1 (3%)
* Percentages based on 29 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Law enforcement agencies were asked what activities they think youth gang members engage in. Results as displayed in Table 21 above were as follows:

- *Eighteen agencies said youth gang members hang out on the streets.*
- *Sixteen agencies said youth gang members drink beer.*
- *Sixteen agencies said youth gang members do drugs.*
- *Sixteen agencies said youth gang members do graffiti.*
- *Fifteen agencies said youth gang members go to parties.*
- *Fifteen agencies said youth gang members sell drugs*
- *Fourteen agencies said youth gang members do vandalism.*

Table 22: Which Of The Following Do You Think Would Help Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Provide more after-school, evening, and weekend activities for kids	27 (79%)
Teach kids how to solve problems without using violence	22 (65%)
Provide adult mentors for kids who are in bad family situations	21 (62%)
Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families	21 (62%)
Explain the dangers of gangs to kids	20 (59%)
Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs	19 (56%)
Provide more jobs for kids	18 (53%)
More effort by police and agencies to reach out to kids and help with their problems	16 (47%)
Provide more job training for kids	15 (44%)
More arrests, prosecution, and punishment of gang members	15 (44%)
More police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity	13 (38%)
Make neighborhoods safer so kids don't need gangs for protection	8 (24%)
Change schools so kids do better and are happier and don't need gangs for support	5 (15%)
Training for parents	2 (6%)
I don't know how to prevent kids from joining gangs	0
* Percentages based on 34 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Table 22 displays strategies that Rhode Island law enforcement agencies believe would help prevent youth from joining gangs:

- *Providing more after-school, evening, and weekend activities for kids was selected by twenty-seven agencies.*
- *Teaching kids how to solve problems without using violence was selected by twenty-two agencies.*
- *Providing adult mentors for kids in bad family situations was selected by twenty-one agencies.*
- *Making family life better so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families was selected by twenty-one agencies.*
- *Explaining the dangers of gangs to kids was selected by twenty agencies.*
- *Helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs was selected by nineteen agencies.*
- *Providing more jobs for kids was selected by eighteen agencies.*

- *More effort by police and agencies to reach out to kids and help with their problems was selected by sixteen agencies.*
- *More arrests, prosecution, and punishment of gang members was selected by fifteen agencies.*
- *More job training for kids was selected by fifteen agencies.*
- *More police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity was selected by thirteen agencies.*

Table 23: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gang?	
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Advice/pressure from an adult they respect	23 (70%)
Getting older and losing interest in the gang	23 (70%)
Finding something they're really good at (music, art, etc.)	20 (61%)
Getting a job	20 (61%)
Joining a sports or recreation program	19 (58%)
Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to a gang	18 (55%)
Doing better in school	14 (42%)
Advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend	12 (36%)
Advice/pressure from a family member or other relative	11 (33%)
Going to the State Training School	10 (30%)
Getting arrested	7 (21%)
* Percentages based on 33 agencies providing responses. More than 1 response could be selected.	

Table 23 above shows reasons that law enforcement agencies believe might cause kids to quit gangs:

- *Advice/pressure from an adult the youth respects was selected by twenty-three agencies.*
- *Getting older and losing interest in the gang was selected by twenty-three agencies.*
- *Getting a job was selected by twenty agencies.*
- *Finding something they're really good at was selected by twenty agencies.*
- *Joining a sports or recreation program was selected by nineteen agencies.*
- *Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to a gang was selected by eighteen agencies.*

It is interesting to note that more punitive factors such as being sent to the State Training School or being arrested were generally regarded by law enforcement agencies as less effective means of getting youth to quit gangs than factors such as adult influence, growing older, getting a job, experiencing success, joining sports or recreation programs, and finding new friends.

Table 24: Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Your City Such As Community Service Activities?			
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>I Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
0 (0%)	22 (76%)	7 (24%)	29 (100%)

Table 24 shows responses to a question about whether youth gangs do any good work such as community service activities. Twenty-two (76%) of twenty-nine responding law enforcement agencies said that youth gangs do not do any good for the community, and seven agencies (24%) said they do not know whether gangs do any good. None of the responding agencies said youth gangs make positive contributions.

Table 25: Are You Aware Of Any Social Service Agencies, Community Centers, Or Other Organizations That Have Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, Or Other Programs Specifically Targeted At Youth Gang Members?		
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
4 (13%)	26 (87%)	30 (100%)
<p align="center">Anti-Gang Services Identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOOP Football League, Providence Police Department • YMCA • Capital City Community Center, 100 Ruggles Street, Providence, RI; 455-3880 • Blackstone Valley Security – School Safety Training Program; 453-2900 • John Reis, Crime Prevention Specialist, Department of Attorney General, 100 South Main Street, Providence, RI 02908 		

Table 25 reveals that only four (13%) of thirty responding law enforcement organizations said they are aware of social service agencies, community centers, or other organizations that have prevention, intervention, treatment, or other programs specifically targeted at youth gang members. The table also lists the anti-gang resources that were identified.

Law enforcement agencies offered the following additional comments and suggestions:

Table 26: Law Enforcement Comments/Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth gangs usually need someone with strong leadership skills for formation. The youth in our community that have these skills are not prone to criminal activity. • There needs to be a definition of the difference between a youth “gang” and a “group,” “clique,” “club,” etc. We have cliques of kids who do not have formal initiation, codes of conduct, swearing in, or criminal hierarchy structure. • Our town does not have a “resident” youth gang problem. Any youth gang problems are intermittent, committed by transients, and not organized in nature. Youth gang presence/activity usually occurs in either of the two state parks in our town. • The answers provided for this survey are the result of a member of our agency being assigned to a task force with the Providence Police over a period of three years. However, due to a lack of manpower, this assignment no longer exists. The RI State Police do maintain intelligence files on gang members and do still operate the NEGIS and RISSNET databases. • There is a need for early intervention programs with the families of gang members. There must be consistent contact once associated with the family. • There is a need for more afterschool programs. • Any activity in our town has been of the “wanna-be” nature. Some youth act and talk like gang members, but they really do not have any association with a gang. • Our small town does not have any “gang” activity. We do have groups of kids who hang out, cause trouble, and abuse alcohol and drugs. I do believe that our community is ignorant and complacent about gang activity, because they have not seen the problems which bigger locales are facing.

Summary Of Findings

1. Seven (20%) of thirty-five Rhode Island law enforcement agencies replying to a survey indicated that they have gang units.
2. Nineteen (58%) of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies said their personnel receive training about gang-related issues.
3. The primary means by which Rhode Island law enforcement agencies learn new methods for dealing with youth gangs are attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops and reading printed materials. Other frequently cited learning strategies were visits to other agencies and video or audio tapes.
4. Nineteen responding law enforcement agencies said they collaborate with other law enforcement organizations to address youth gang issues. Twelve agencies said they

collaborate with schools. Fourteen agencies said they do not collaborate with other organizations on youth gang issues.

5. Twenty-one responding law enforcement agencies said they do not specifically target any particular statutes or ordinances at youth gangs. Of those agencies that do target laws and ordinances at gangs, noise ordinances are employed by ten agencies and truancy statutes and drinking in public ordinances are each used by seven agencies.
6. Twenty responding law enforcement agencies indicated that they do not use any particular strategies to combat youth gangs. Among agencies that do use particular anti-gang strategies, directed patrol and gathering gang intelligence are each used by seven agencies, confidential informants are used by six agencies, police-community meetings are used by five agencies, and multi-agency coordination is used by four agencies.
7. Among Rhode Island law enforcement agencies using specific anti-youth gang strategies, the strategies identified as most effective include directed patrol, confidential informants, and gang intelligence gathering.
8. Fifty percent of responding law enforcement agencies said that when they intake a youth, information is gathered about whether the youth is a member of a gang, and fifty percent of responding agencies said they do not obtain such information.
9. Six Rhode Island law enforcement agencies provided estimates of the number of active youth gangs and gang members in their communities. The estimated totals were 46 gangs and 1389 gang members. Estimates provided by the Rhode Island State Police, a statewide organization, probably duplicates some estimates from local agencies.
10. Fifteen (45%) of thirty-three responding law enforcement agencies said youth gangs aren't any problem in their communities. Thirteen agencies (39%) said youth gangs aren't much of a problem. Five agencies (15%) said that youth gangs are a really serious or somewhat serious problem in their communities.
11. Twenty-six responding law enforcement agencies said that one way they learn which youth are in gangs is through word getting around that certain kids belong to certain gangs. Twenty-two agencies said youth gang members are recognizable from gang signs, symbols, or graffiti. Twenty-one agencies said kids tell people they belong to gangs. Fifteen agencies said kids in gangs are recognizable by gang colors on clothes, jewelry or hair; and fifteen agencies said youth gang members are recognizable by tattoos.

12. Reasons most often selected by Rhode Island law enforcement agencies to explain why youth join gangs were: (a) kids have friends in gangs; (b) kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere; (c) kids think being in a gang will protect them from other gangs and people; (d) kids think they will be more important if they join a gang; (e) kids start hanging out with gang members and decide to join; (f) kids think joining a gang will be like joining a happy family; (g) kids think being in a gang will cause other people to respect them more; and (h) kids think they will get more money, drugs, or other things in a gang.
 13. Youth gang activities most frequently identified by law enforcement agencies were: (a) hanging out on the streets; (b) drinking beer; (c) doing drugs; (d) doing graffiti; (e) going to parties; (f) selling drugs; and (g) committing vandalism.
 14. Strategies most often selected by Rhode Island law enforcement agencies as means of preventing youth from joining youth gangs were: (a) providing more after-school, evening, and weekend activities; (b) teaching kids how to solve problems without using violence; (c) providing adult mentors for kids in bad family situations; (d) making family life better so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families; (e) explaining the dangers of gangs to kids; (f) helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs; (g) providing more jobs for kids; (h) more effort by police and agencies to reach out and help kids with their problems; (i) more arrests, prosecution, and punishment of gang members; (j) more job training; and (k) more police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity.
 15. Law enforcement agencies selected the following reasons as factors most likely to cause youth to quit gangs: (a) advice/pressure from a respected adult; (b) getting older and losing interest in the gang; (c) getting a job; (d) finding something positive the youth is good at; (e) joining a sports or recreation program; and (f) hanging out with new friends who are not gang members. More punitive factors such as being sent to the State Training School or being arrested were generally regarded by law enforcement agencies as less effective means of getting youth to quit gangs.
 16. Twenty-two (76%) of twenty-nine responding law enforcement agencies said that youth gangs do not do any good for the community such as community service activities. Seven agencies (24%) said they do not know whether gangs do any good. None of the responding agencies said youth gangs make a positive contribution.
-

17. Twenty-six (87%) of responding law enforcement agencies said they are not aware of any social service agencies, community centers, or other organizations that have prevention, intervention, treatment, or other programs specifically targeted at youth gang members.

Youth Perceptions Of Youth Gangs & Their Impact

The primary reason the Rhode Island Justice Commission commissioned this study was to obtain insights from “normal youth” about the youth gang problem and how it impacts their lives. “Normal youth” refers to youth who are not active gang members. They attend school, though in some cases through alternative learning programs, and they are not serious or violent offenders, though they may have had minor contacts with the juvenile justice system. Ideally they are also “street-wise” and knowledgeable about the youth gang situation in their community. It was determined that the best way to access such youth was through social service agencies in the six targeted cities: Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Woonsocket, Newport, and Cranston. Thus focus groups were conducted with youth participating in agencies’ summer and after-school programs. Focus group participants were asked to complete an anonymous survey about gangs. Since the youth surveyed are not a scientifically drawn sample of all adolescents in the targeted communities, it is not known whether the survey results accurately represent beliefs and attitudes of other youth in the communities.

A total of seventeen focus groups were conducted in the six cities, with a duplicated total of 428 youth participants completing surveys. The count of 428 was duplicated because some youth in Providence were surveyed twice: once before an educational presentation about youth gangs and again after the presentation to see if attitudes changed as a result of information presented. Eighty-three youth completed the pre-surveys before the educational presentation, and eighty-five youth completed the post-surveys after the presentation. Pre-surveying occurred one to three weeks before the presentation, so some youth who completed pre-surveys probably did not attend the presentation and complete post-surveys, and some youth who attended the presentation and completed post-surveys probably had not completed pre-surveys. Because the surveys were anonymous without names or codes, it is not known how many youth completed both pre- and post-surveys and how many only completed one of the surveys.

Analysis of the youth survey results is presented in two parts. This chapter provides results for youth who were not in focus groups that were part of the pre- and post-surveying associated with the gang educational presentation. The next chapter provides results for youth

who participated in Providence focus groups that were part of pre- and post-surveying related to the gang presentation.

Of the 428 surveys completed by youth in all focus groups in all six communities (*Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Woonsocket, Newport, and Cranston*), 343 were completed by youth not involved in the Providence gang education presentation and related pre- and post-surveying. The following tables present and discuss results for those 343 unduplicated youth. Results are not presented for each city and town, because numbers of youth respondents from individual communities were relatively small, as Table 27 below displays. However, Appendix B of this report does contain individual youth survey responses for Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Woonsocket, Newport, and Cranston.

Table 27: City/Town Where Unduplicated Youth Respondents Reside		
<i>City/Town</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Providence	171	50%
Pawtucket	41	12%
Central Falls	30	9%
Woonsocket	30	9%
Cranston	29	9%
Newport	21	6%
Middletown	5	2%
West Warwick	3	0.9%
Warwick	3	0.9%
Cumberland	2	0.6%
North Providence	2	0.6%
Lowell, MA	1	0.3%
Johnston	1	0.3%
Westerly	1	0.3%
TOTAL	340	100%

All of the focus groups were conducted in the targeted cities of Providence, Pawtucket,, Central Falls, Woonsocket, Cranston and Newport. Table 27 shows that 95% of the survey responses were from youth in those communities. Respondents from other communities were youth participating in programs in the targeted cities where focus groups were conducted. Half of the survey responses came from youth in Providence.

Table 28: Gender Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents		
<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
181 (53%)	160 (47%)	341 (100%)

Table 28 indicates that survey respondents were relatively evenly divided in terms of gender, with 53% of responses coming from females and 47% coming from males.

Table 29: Age Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents			
<i>10 & Under</i>	<i>11-15</i>	<i>16 & Older</i>	<i>Total</i>
45 (13%)	254 (75%)	40 (12%)	339 (100%)

As Table 29 displays, 75% of youth survey respondents were between the ages of eleven and fifteen; 13% were ten years of age and younger; and 12% were sixteen or older.

Table 30: Race/Ethnicity Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents								
<i>African Amer.</i>	<i>Amer. Indian</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>SE Asian</i>	<i>Multi-Racial</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
35 (10%)	7 (2%)	46 (14%)	88 (26%)	113 (33%)	21 (6%)	20 (6%)	11 (3%)	341 (100%)

Table 30 shows that 33% of youth survey respondents were Southeast Asian; 26% were Hispanic; 14% were Caucasian; 10% were African American; and 6% were multi-racial. This is based on self-report information from the respondents. Relatively high percentages of minority youth were surveyed because of perceptions among criminal justice professionals that the most active youth gang activity in Rhode Island is concentrated among those populations

Table 31: School Status Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents		
<i>Go To School</i>	<i>Don't Go To School</i>	<i>Total</i>
326 (97%)	11 (3%)	337 (100%)

As displayed in Table 31, 97% of youth respondents attend school. The fact that youth who have dropped out of school were not well represented in the study is attributable to the fact that 88% of the youth in the focus groups were younger than sixteen and thus still legally required to attend school.

Table 32: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community?

Youth gangs are a really serious problem.	Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem.	Youth gangs aren't much of a problem.	Youth gangs aren't any problem.	I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem.	<i>Total</i>
81 (24%)	82 (24%)	70 (21%)	32 (10%)	71 (21%)	336 (100%)

Table 32 reveals that nearly half of youth surveyed (48%) said that youth gangs are either a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem. Slightly less than one-third of respondents (31%) said youth gangs aren't much of a problem or aren't any problem. Slightly more than one-fifth of youth said they don't know whether or not youth gangs are a problem. This data can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it might be concluded that significantly more youth in this study believe youth gangs are a problem than believe gangs aren't much or any problem. On the other hand it might be postulated that youth who don't know whether gangs are a problem apparently are not negatively impacted by gangs to any great extent, and therefore they can be grouped with youth who said gangs aren't much or any problem. This would increase that portion of the sample to 52% (21% + 10% + 21%), which is higher than the 48% of respondents who said gangs are a problem. Under either interpretation, it is notable that approximately half of the youth surveyed stated that gangs are either a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem.

Table 33: Do You Think It's Cool To Be In A Gang?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
24 (7%)	236 (69%)	83 (24%)	343 (100%)

Table 33 indicates that 69% of youth surveyed said that it is not cool to be in a gang. Only 7% said it is cool to be in a gang, and 24% said they are not sure. While it is encouraging that nearly seven out of ten youth believe it is not cool to be in a gang, the fact that nearly one out of four respondents are undecided and might be swayed to believe that gang membership is cool could be cause for concern.

Table 34: Do You Have Friends Who Are Gang Members?			
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
163 (48%)	122 (36%)	58 (17%)	343 (100%)

As Table 34 displays, nearly half of all youth who completed the survey (48%) said they have friends who are gang members. Only approximately one-third of all respondents (36%) said they do not have friends who are gang members, while 17% were not sure.

Table 35: What Would Your Friends Think If You Joined A Gang?				
My friends would respect me more.	My friends would respect me less.	It wouldn't change what my friends think about me.	Not sure	<i>Total</i>
36 (11%)	87 (25%)	99 (29%)	120 (35%)	342 (100%)

As shown in Table 35, approximately three out of ten youth respondents (29%) said that if they joined a gang their friends' thoughts about them wouldn't change. One out of four respondents (25%) said their friends would respect them less if they joined a gang, and about one out of ten (11%) said their friends would respect them more. More than one-third of youth (35%) were not sure what their friends would think if they joined a gang. While it is positive that only 11% of the youth surveyed believe that the act of joining a gang would bring more respect from friends, it is troubling that only 25% of the youth believe that joining a gang would result in a loss of respect. This suggests that when deciding whether or not to join a gang, many youth would not be especially concerned about negative reactions from their friends.

Table 36: Do You Think Being In A Gang Makes It More Likely You Will Get Into Trouble?			
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
257 (75%)	29 (9%)	55 (16%)	341 (100%)

Table 36 indicates that three-quarters of youth surveyed (75%) said that being in a gang makes it more likely a person will get into trouble. Fewer than one out of ten respondents (9%) said that being in a gang does not increase the likelihood of getting into trouble. The remainder – 16% - were not sure.

Table 37: Do You Think You Are Safer And Have More Protection If You Join A Gang Or If You Don't Join A Gang?

Safer and more protection if you join a gang	Safer and more protection if you don't join a gang	Same amount of safety/protection whether or not you're in a gang	I Don't Know	<i>Total</i>
29 (9%)	166 (49%)	74 (22%)	70 (21%)	339 (100%)

Table 37 indicates that approximately half of all survey respondents (49%) said that youth are safer and have more protection if they do not join a gang. Fewer than one out of ten respondents (9%) said that joining a gang brings more safety and protection. This is positive, because it suggests that the need for more safety and protection would not be an important factor motivating youth to join gangs.

Table 38: Are There Gang Members In Your School?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Don't Go To School</i>	<i>Total</i>
158 (46%)	52 (15%)	124 (36%)	7 (2%)	341 (100%)

Table 38 reveals that slightly fewer than half of all youth who completed the survey (46%) said there are gang members in their school. Only 15% of responding youth said their school does not have gang members, while 36% were not sure. This does not necessarily mean that half of all schools attended by youth who were surveyed have gangs, because many youth answering "yes" to this question may attend the same school(s). Nor should these findings be generalized to all schools in Rhode Island, because the communities targeted for this study were those thought to be most likely to have youth gangs.

Table 39: How Worried Are You That You Might Get Hurt At School By Gangs?

Very Worried	Somewhat Worried	A Little Worried	Not At All Worried	Don't Think There Are Gangs At My School	Don't Go To School	<i>Total</i>
53 (16%)	22 (7%)	53 (16%)	150 (44%)	55 (16%)	7 (2%)	340 (100%)

As shown in Table 39, more than four out of ten youth surveyed (44%) said they are not at all worried about being hurt at school by gangs, while nearly four out of ten (39%) said they are very, somewhat, or a little worried that gangs at their school will hurt them.

Table 40: Which Of The Following Ways Help You Tell That Someone In Your Community Belongs To A Youth Gang?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Gang signs, symbols or graffiti	231 (67%)
Gang colors	196 (57%)
Kids tell you they belong to a gang	167 (49%)
Gang tattoos	167 (49%)
Gang handshakes or hand signals	152 (44%)
Word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs	150 (44%)
Different gang language	106 (31%)
Gang initiations	80 (23%)
Other	23 (7%)
I Don't know how to tell whether other kids belong to gangs	46 (13%)
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

Youth were asked how they tell that someone belongs to a gang. As Table 40 displays, the most frequently selected choices were:

- < *Gang signs, symbols, or graffiti*
- < *Gang colors*
- < *Kids saying they belong to a gang*
- < *Gang tattoos*
- < *Gang handshakes or hand signals*
- < *Word getting around that certain kids belong to certain gangs*

Table 41: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join	227 (66%)
Kids join because friends are in the gang	212 (62%)
Kids think being in a gang will protect them from others	173 (50%)
Kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang	165 (48%)
Kids think being in a gang will get them more respect	165 (48%)
Kids think being in a gang is exciting	164 (48%)
Kids think they will get money, drugs, or other things in a gang	159 (46%)

Table 41: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang	156 (45%)
Gangs pressure kids to join	140 (41%)
Kids think they will be more important if they join a gang	133 (39%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong	132 (38%)
Girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang	117 (34%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel useful	104 (30%)
Kids think a gang will be like joining a happy family	85 (25%)
Gangs recruit members	81 (24%)
I Don't know why kids join gangs	54 (16%)
Other	10 (3%)
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

As displayed in Table 41, the two reasons most frequently selected by survey respondents to explain why youth in their community join gangs were:

- < *Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join, and*
- < *Kids join because friends are in gangs*

Other reasons frequently selected were:

- < *Kids think that being in a gang will protect them from others*
- < *Kids join because siblings belong to a gang*
- < *Kids think that being in a gang will get them more respect*
- < *Kids think that being in a gang is exciting*
- < *Kids think they will get money, drugs, or other things in a gang*
- < *Guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang*

Note that data presented in previous tables indicate that youth survey respondents do not believe increased protection and gaining respect would be motivations for them to join a gang, though here the respondents state that those are reasons why other youth join gangs.

Table 42: Which Of The Following Activities Do You Think Gang Members In Your Community Do Together?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Hang out on streets	299 (87%)
Fight with other gangs & people	272 (79%)
Do drugs	265 (77%)
Drink beer	250 (73%)
Sell drugs	248 (72%)
Go to parties	218 (64%)
Look for girls	212 (62%)
Cruise	161 (47%)
Steal from stores	235 (69%)
Steal cars	226 (66%)
Do graffiti	223 (65%)
Rob people	215 (63%)
Break into houses	204 (59%)
Do vandalism	199 (58%)
Hang out at malls	180 (52%)
Play sports	137 (40%)
Do community service	37 (11%)
Don't know	22 (6%)
Other	8 (2%)
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

Table 42 provides perceptions of survey respondents about activities that gang members engage in together. The most frequently identified activities were:

- < *Hanging out on the streets*
- < *Fighting with other gangs and people*
- < *Doing drugs*
- < *Drinking beer*
- < *Selling drugs*

Table 43: Have You Ever Done Any Of The Following Things Because You Were Afraid Of Gangs?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Not gone to certain areas of the community	85 (25%)
Not gone out at night	71 (21%)
Not walked in your neighborhood	53 (15%)
Carried a weapon	42 (12%)
Not gone to parties	30 (9%)
Not gone to school	27 (8%)
Not hung out with friends	27 (8%)
Not gone to stores	20 (6%)
Not gone to recreational or other fun activities	18 (5%)
Not joined sports teams	16 (5%)
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

Youth surveyed were asked what things they have done or not done because of fear of gangs, and Table 43 displays the results:

- < One out of four youth (25%) said they have not gone to certain areas of the community.
- < One out of five youth (21%) said they have not gone out at night.
- < Nearly one out of seven youth (15%) said they have not walked in their neighborhood.
- < More than one out of eight youth (12%) said they have carried a weapon.

While other preventive measures may represent prudent judgment, the fact that 42 youth (12%) said they have carried a weapon because of fear of gangs is disturbing.

Table 44: Which Of The Following Do You Think Would Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Explain dangers of gangs to kids	214 (62%)
Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join	180 (52%)
Teach kids how to solve problems without violence	175 (51%)
More jobs for kids	157 (46%)
More police patrols & surveillance	155 (45%)
Make neighborhoods safer so gangs aren't needed for protection	153 (45%)
Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs	150 (44%)

Table 44: Which Of The Following Do You Think Would Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
More after-school, evening, & weekend activities for kids	149 (43%)
Police & agencies reaching out to help kids with problems	144 (42%)
More job training for kids	137 (40%)
Adult mentors for kids in bad family situations	137 (40%)
More arrests, prosecution, & punishment of gangs	136 (40%)
Change schools so kids do better & don't need gang support	115 (34%)
Don't know	66 (19%)
Other	12 (3%)
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

Table 44 provides responses to a question asking about strategies that might prevent youth from joining gangs. The most frequently identified strategies were:

- < *Explaining the dangers of gangs to kids*
- < *Helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs*
- < *Teaching kids how to solve problems without violence*

Table 45: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gang?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs	176 (51%)
Advice/pressure from family member or other relative	160 (47%)
Finding something they're really good at	159 (46%)
Advice/pressure from girlfriend/ boyfriend	155 (45%)
Advice/pressure from adult they respect	153 (45%)
Going to the State Training School	151 (44%)
Getting a job	147 (43%)
Getting arrested	145 (42%)
Getting older & losing interest in the gang	144 (42%)
Doing better in school	123 (36%)
Joining a sports or recreation program	121 (35%)
Other	22 (6%)

Table 45: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gang?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Number Yes</i>
* Percentages based on 343 youth respondents. More than 1 choice could be selected.	

As displayed in Table 45, survey respondents most frequently selected the following factors that might cause youth who belong to gangs to quit their gangs:

- < *Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs*
- < *Advice/pressure from family members or other relatives*
- < *Finding something they're really good at*
- < *Advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend*
- < *Advice/pressure from a respected adult*
- < *Going to the State Training School*

It is noteworthy that the one punitive juvenile justice system response on the list – going to the State Training School – was not perceived by youth survey respondents to be as important a motivator for quitting gangs as a number of other factors.

Table 46: Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Your City Such As Community Service Activities?			
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
19 (6%)	163 (51%)	138 (43%)	320 (100%)

Table 46 shows that approximately half of all youth survey respondents (51%) said youth gangs do not do any good for their city such as community service activities. Interestingly, more than four out of ten respondents (43%) said they do not know whether youth gangs do any good. This suggests that a significant number of the survey respondents do not have such totally negative perceptions of youth gangs that they are convinced the gangs do nothing positive.

Summary Of Findings

1. Approximately one-half (48%) of youth surveyed said that youth gangs are a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem. Approximately three out of ten respondents (31%) said youth gangs aren't much of or any problem. The remainder said they don't know.

2. Nearly seven out of ten youth surveyed (69%) said it is not cool to be in a gang. Only 7% said it is cool to be in a gang.
3. Nearly half (48%) of all youth surveyed said they have friends who are gang members.
4. Approximately one out of three youth surveyed (29%) said that if they joined a gang their friends' thoughts about them wouldn't change. One out of four respondents (25%) said their friends would respect them less if they joined a gang, and about one out of ten (11%) said their friends would respect them more. More than one-third of youth (35%) were not sure what their friends would think if they joined a gang. While it is positive that only 11% of the youth surveyed believed that the act of joining a gang would bring more respect from friends, it is troubling that only 25% of the youth believed that joining a gang would result in a loss of respect. This suggests that when deciding whether or not to join a gang, many youth would not be especially concerned about negative reactions from their friends.
5. Three-quarters of youth surveyed (75%) said that being in a gang makes it more likely a person will get into trouble.
6. Approximately half of all survey respondents (49%) said that youth are safer and have more protection if they do not join a gang. Fewer than one out of ten respondents (9%) said that joining a gang brings more safety and protection. This suggests that the need for more safety and protection is not an important factor motivating youth to join gangs.
7. Slightly fewer than half of all youth who completed the survey (46%) said there are gang members in their school. Only 15% of responding youth said their school does not have gang members, while 36% were not sure.
8. More than four out of ten youth surveyed (44%) said they are not at all worried about being hurt at school by gangs, while nearly four out of ten (39%) said they are very, somewhat, or a little worried that gangs at their school will hurt them.
9. Youth survey respondents most frequently identified the following means of telling whether someone belongs to a gang: (a) gang signs, symbols, or graffiti; (b) gang colors; (c) kids saying they belong to a gang; (d) gang tattoos; (e) gang handshakes or hand signals; and (f) word getting around that certain kids belong to certain gangs.

10. The two related reasons most frequently selected by survey respondents to explain why youth in their community join gangs were: (a) kids hang out with gang members and decide to join; and (b) kids join because their friends are in gangs.
11. The most frequently selected preventive measures that survey respondents said they have taken because of fear of gangs were: (a) not going to certain areas of the community; (b) not going out at night; (c) not walking in their neighborhood; and (d) carrying a weapon. While the other measures may represent prudent judgment, the fact that 42 youth (12%) said they have carried a weapon because of fear of gangs is disturbing.
12. Youth survey respondents most frequently identified the following as strategies that might prevent kids from joining gangs: (a) explaining the dangers of gangs to kids; (b) helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to joining gangs; and (c) teaching kids how to solve problems without violence.
13. Youth survey respondents most frequently identified the following as reasons why gang members might quit gangs: (a) hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs; (b) advice/pressure from family members or other relatives; (c) finding something else the youth is really good at; (d) advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend; (e) advice/pressure from a respected adult; and (f) going to the State Training School.
14. Approximately half of all survey respondents (51%) said youth gangs do not do any good for their city or town such as engaging in community service projects.

Changes In Youth Attitudes Following A Gang Educational Presentation

As explained in the previous chapter, some youth participating in focus groups in Providence were surveyed twice: once before an educational presentation about youth gangs and again after the presentation to see if attitudes changed as a result of what they learned. The educational presentation was made by a Crime Prevention Specialist for the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General. The youth who received the presentation were Southeast Asians between the ages of eleven and sixteen attending a summer 2001 academy sponsored by the Providence Mayor's Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Eighty-three youth completed the pre-surveys before the educational presentation, and eighty-five youth completed the post-surveys after the presentation. Pre-surveying occurred one to three weeks before the presentation, so undoubtedly some youth who completed pre-surveys did not attend the presentation and did not complete post-surveys, and undoubtedly some youth who attended the presentation and completed post-surveys had not completed pre-surveys. Because the surveys were anonymous without names or codes, it is not known how many youth completed both pre- and post-surveys and how many only completed one of the surveys. It is believed that most youth in the two groups were the same, and it is believed that youth who were different were well-matched on many characteristics. Virtually all of the youth pre- and post-surveyed were Southeast Asian, virtually all were between the ages of eleven and sixteen, virtually all came from the same Providence neighborhoods and attended the same schools, and the percentage of girls and boys was nearly identical for the pre-survey and post-survey groups.

The pre-surveys were administered by the person who conducted all focus groups for this project. The pre-surveys were administered at two different times: to a group of thirty youth approximately three weeks prior to the gang educational presentation, and to a group of fifty-three youth approximately one week before the presentation. The post-surveys were administered by the Crime Prevention Specialist from the Department of Attorney General who made the gang educational presentation. The post-surveys were administered immediately after the presentation to eighty-five youth. Since the pre- and post-surveys were administered by different persons, there may have been differences in survey administration that had an effect on responses.

Table 47: Gender Of Providence Youth In Pre- & Post-Groups			
<i>Group</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pre-Survey	49 (59%)	34 (41%)	83 (100%)
Post-Survey	52 (61%)	33 (39%)	85 (100%)

As Table 47 indicates, the gender of youth in the two survey groups was very similar, with 59% females and 41% males in the pre-test group and 61% females and 39% females in the post-test group.

Table 48: Race/Ethnicity Of Providence Youth In Pre- & Post-Groups				
<i>Group</i>	<i>SE Asian</i>	<i>Amer. Indian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pre-Survey	79 (96%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	82 (100%)
Post-Survey	82 (97%)	0	3 (4%)	85 (100%)

As Table 48 displays, the race/ethnicity of youth in the two survey groups was nearly identical, with 96% Southeast Asians in the pre-survey group and 97% Southeast Asians in the post-survey group.

Table 49: School Status Of Providence Youth In Pre- & Post-Groups			
<i>Group</i>	<i>Go To School</i>	<i>Don't Go To School</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pre-Survey	78 (98%)	2 (3%)	80 (100%)
Post-Survey	85 (100%)	0	85 (100%)

Table 49 shows that 98% of youth in the pre-survey group and 100% of youth in the post-survey group attend school.

Table 50: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Providence Pre-Survey</i>	<i>Providence Post-Survey</i>
Youth gangs are a really serious problem.	26 (33%)	18 (21%)
Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem.	18 (23%)	25 (30%)
Youth gangs aren't much of a problem.	16 (20%)	10 (12%)
Youth gangs aren't any problem.	6 (8%)	3 (4%)
I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem.	14 (18%)	28 (33%)
TOTAL	80 (100%)	84 (100%)

Table 50 compares pre- and post-survey responses to a question asking respondents how serious a problem they think youth gangs are in their community. The percentage of youth stating that gangs are a really serious problem dropped from 33% for the pre-survey group to 21% in the post-survey group, while the percentage of youth stating that gangs are somewhat of a problem increased from 23% for the pre-survey group to 30% for the post-survey group. This suggests that information provided during the presentation caused some youth who previously had believed that gangs are a really serious problem to change their opinions and perceive youth gangs to be only somewhat of a problem. Combining the categories, the percentage of youth believing that gangs were either a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem decreased from 56% for the pre-survey group to 51% for the post-survey group.

Table 50 also reveals that the percentage of youth believing that gangs aren't much of a problem dropped from 20% for the pre-survey group to 12% for the post-survey group, and the percentage of youth believing that gangs aren't any problem decreased from 8% for the pre-survey group to 4% for the post-survey group. Combining categories, the percentage of youth stating that gangs aren't much or any problem fell from 28% for the pre-survey group to 16% for the post survey group.

Interestingly then, following the youth gang presentation there was a decrease both in the percentage of youth who believe gangs are a really serious or somewhat of a problem, and also a decrease in the percentage of youth who believe gangs aren't much or any problem. This is explained by the fact that the percentage of youth who said they don't know whether gangs are a problem jumped from 18% for pre-survey respondents to 33% for post-survey respondents. These responses suggest that the presentation caused participants to think about youth gangs in a different way than they had previously, perhaps challenging their beliefs and redefining terms, which created uncertainty.

Table 51: Do You Think It's Cool To Be In A Gang?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Yes	13 (16%)	2 (2%)
No	38 (46%)	65 (77%)
Not Sure	32 (39%)	18 (21%)
TOTAL	83 (100%)	85 (100%)

As displayed in Table 51, youth opinions about whether it is cool to be in a gang changed significantly following the gang educational presentation. Prior to the presentation, 16% of the youth surveyed said yes it's cool to be in a gang and 46% said no it isn't. Following the presentation, only 2% of respondents said it's cool to be in a gang, while 77% said no it isn't. Presumably information provided during the presentation caused some youth to change their minds and decide that gang membership is not cool.

Table 52: Do You Have Friends Who Are Gang Members?		
Responses	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Yes	58 (70%)	48 (57%)
No	15 (18%)	19 (22%)
Not Sure	10 (12%)	18 (21%)
TOTAL	83 (100%)	85 (100%)

Table 52 shows that prior to the gang educational presentation, 70% of youth said they had friends who were gang members and 18% said they did not. Following the presentation, the percentage of youth who said they had friends who were gang members decreased to 57%, and the percentage of youth who said they did not have friends who were gang members rose to 22%. In addition, the percentage of youth who said they weren't sure whether they had friends who were gang members increased from 12% before the presentation to 21% after the presentation. These responses suggest that information provided during the presentation may have caused youth to narrow their definition of gang membership and exclude some friends who were previously regarded as gang members, while also creating more uncertainty about whether other friends were gang members. This is consistent with responses to an earlier question (*see Table 50*) asking whether youth gangs are a problem in the community. Those responses showed decreases both in percentages of youth perceiving gangs as a problem and percentages of youth not perceiving gangs as a problem, with a large increase in the percentage of youth who weren't sure. This also suggests that information provided during the presentation caused youth to rethink the definition of a gang, which created some confusion in their minds.

NOTE: An alternative explanation for the results in Tables 50 and 52 is that many of the youth who completed the post-survey were different from youth who completed the pre-survey and had different perceptions of gang problems and gang membership, and perhaps had different friends.

It is believed that most of the youth in the pre- and post-survey groups were the same, but because the surveys were anonymous, this cannot be known for certain.

Table 53: What Would Your Friends Think If You Joined A Gang?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
My friends would respect me more.	10 (12%)	6 (7%)
My friends would respect me less.	10 (12%)	18 (21%)
It wouldn't change what my friends think about me.	27 (33%)	23 (27%)
Not sure	35 (43%)	38 (45%)
TOTAL	82 (100%)	85 (100%)

As displayed in Table 53, prior to the gang educational presentation, 12% of youth said their friends would respect them more if they joined a gang and 12% said their friends would respect them less. Following the presentation, the percentage of youth stating that joining a gang would cause their friends to respect them more dropped to 7%, and the percentage stating that their friends would respect them less climbed to 21%. This suggests that the presentation did convince some youth that joining a gang would not bring them more respect. Both before and after the presentation, approximately three-quarters of youth respondents said either that joining a gang wouldn't change what their friends thought of them or that they weren't sure whether friends' opinions would change. This suggests that for most youth, perceived opinions of friends' respect would not be a major factor in a decision about whether or not to join a gang.

Table 54: Do You Think Being In A Gang Makes It More Likely You Will Get Into Trouble?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Yes	47 (57%)	62 (74%)
No	7 (9%)	4 (5%)
Not Sure	28 (34%)	18 (21%)
TOTAL	82 (100%)	84 (100%)

Table 54 indicates that following the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth believing that being in a gang makes getting into trouble more likely jumped from 57% to 74%. There were decreases both in the percentage of respondents believing that being in a gang does not make getting into trouble more likely and in the percentage of youth who weren't sure. This suggests that information provided during the presentation effectively convinced many youth that being in a gang could result in negative consequences.

Table 55: Do You Think You Are Safer And Have More Protection If You Join A Gang Or Don't Join A Gang?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Safer and more protection if you join a gang	13 (16%)	2 (2%)
Safer and more protection if you don't join a gang	17 (21%)	35 (41%)
Same amount of safety/ protection whether or not you're in a gang	25 (31%)	18 (21%)
I don't know	26 (32%)	30 (35%)
TOTAL	81 (100%)	85 (100%)

Table 55 reveals that after the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth believing that joining a gang brings more safety and protection decreased from 16% to 2%, while the percentage believing that it is safer not to join a gang increased dramatically from 21% to 41%. In addition, the percentage of youth believing that there was the same amount of safety and protection in a gang as not in a gang dropped from 31% to 21%. These responses suggest that the presentation convinced many youth that they would be safer not to join a gang.

Table 56: Are There Gang Members In Your School?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Yes	54 (66%)	44 (52%)
No	5 (6%)	6 (7%)
Not Sure	21 (26%)	35 (41%)
Don't Go To School	2 (2%)	0
TOTAL	82 (100%)	85 (100%)

Table 56 shows that the percentage of youth believing that there were gang members in their school decreased from 66% to 52% after the gang educational presentation, and the percentage of youth who weren't sure whether their school had gang members increased from 26% to 41%. This is consistent with responses to other questions (*see Tables 50 & 52*) suggesting that the presentation caused youth to more narrowly define the terms gang and gang member, which resulted in more uncertainty about who is and is not a gang member. (*As noted after Table 52, these results are also consistent with the possibility that the pre- and post-survey groups did not have as many of the same youth as is believed.*)

Table 57: How Worried Are You That You Might Get Hurt At School By Gangs?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Very Worried	6 (7%)	17 (20%)
Somewhat Worried	8 (10%)	12 (14%)
A Little Worried	17 (21%)	18 (21%)
Not At All Worried	44 (54%)	23 (27%)
Don't Think There Are Gangs At My School	5 (6%)	13 (15%)
Don't Go To School	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
TOTAL	81 (100%)	85 (100%)

As Table 57 indicates, following the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth stating that they were very or somewhat worried about getting hurt at school by gangs doubled from 17% to 34%. Correspondingly, the percentage of youth who said they were not at all worried was cut in half from 54% to 27%. This suggests that the presentation convinced many youth that the presence of gangs at their school posed a threat to their well-being.

Table 58: Which Of The Following Ways Help You Tell That Someone In Your Community Belongs To A Youth Gang?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Gang signs, symbols, or graffiti	55 (66%)	64 (75%)
Gang tattoos	47 (57%)	49 (58%)
Gang colors	44 (53%)	50 (59%)
Kids tell you they belong to a gang	31 (37%)	36 (42%)
Word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs	27 (33%)	41 (48%)
Gang handshakes or hand signals	27 (33%)	41 (48%)
Different gang language	21 (25%)	30 (35%)
Gang initiations at school or other places	16 (19%)	20 (24%)
Don't know how to tell whether someone's in a gang	12 (15%)	16 (19%)
Other	1 (1%)	4 (5%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

Table 58 reveals that after the gang educational presentation, higher percentages of youth selected nearly all ways listed on the survey of telling whether someone belongs to a gang. This suggests that information provided during the presentation educated more youth about means of identifying gang members.

Table 59: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join	47 (57%)	57 (67%)
Kids join because friends are in the gang	42 (51%)	59 (69%)
Kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang	37 (45%)	51 (60%)
Guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang	35 (42%)	48 (57%)
Kids think being in a gang is exciting	34 (41%)	39 (46%)
Kids think being in a gang will protect them from others	34 (41%)	56 (66%)
Kids think being in a gang will get them more respect	34 (41%)	52 (61%)
Kids think they will get money, drugs, or other things in a gang	28 (34%)	50 (59%)
Girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang	27 (33%)	40 (47%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong	24 (29%)	40 (47%)
Don't know why kids join gangs	23 (28%)	19 (22%)
Kids think they will be more important if they join a gang	21 (25%)	42 (49%)
Kids think a gang will be like joining a happy family	15 (18%)	37 (44%)
Gangs pressure kids to join	15 (18%)	46 (54%)
Gangs recruit members	13 (16%)	31 (37%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel useful	12 (15%)	32 (38%)
Other	2 (2%)	4 (5%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

Table 59 shows that following the gang educational presentation, higher percentages of respondents selected all reasons listed on the survey as explanations for why youth join gangs. Correspondingly, the percentage of respondents stating that they don't know why youth join gangs decreased after the presentation. This suggests that the presentation educated more youth about motivations for gang membership.

Table 60: Which Of The Following Activities Do You Think Youth Gang Members In Your Community Do Together?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Hang out on streets	65 (78%)	73 (86%)
Hang out at malls	55 (66%)	50 (59%)
Fight with other gangs & people	55 (66%)	67 (79%)
Do drugs	54 (65%)	67 (79%)

Table 60: Which Of The Following Activities Do You Think Youth Gang Members In Your Community Do Together?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Drink beer	52 (63%)	69 (81%)
Look for girls	51 (61%)	54 (64%)
Steal from stores	51 (61%)	61 (72%)
Play sports	48 (58%)	41 (48%)
Steal cars	47 (57%)	63 (74%)
Go to parties	45 (54%)	57 (67%)
Do graffiti	45 (54%)	53 (62%)
Sell drugs	43 (52%)	67 (79%)
Cruise	41 (49%)	48 (57%)
Rob people	39 (47%)	52 (61%)
Do vandalism	39 (47%)	41 (48%)
Break into houses	35 (42%)	50 (59%)
Do community service	9 (11%)	9 (11%)
Don't know	8 (10%)	5 (6%)
Other	1 (1%)	6 (7%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

As displayed in Table 60, nearly all items listed on the survey as possible gang activities were selected by more youth after the gang educational presentation than before. The two exceptions were playing sports, a positive activity, and hanging out at malls, a neutral activity. These responses suggest that following the presentation, youth had more negative perceptions of gang behavior.

Table 61: Have You Ever Done Any Of The Following Things Because You Were Afraid Of Youth Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Not gone to certain areas of the community	18 (22%)	28 (33%)
Not gone out at night	15 (18%)	26 (31%)
Not gone to parties	8 (10%)	10 (12%)
Carried a weapon	8 (10%)	4 (5%)
Not hung out with friends	8 (10%)	9 (11%)
Not walked in your neighborhood	7 (8%)	12 (14%)
Not joined sports teams	6 (7%)	6 (7%)
Not gone to school	5 (6%)	6 (7%)

Table 61: Have You Ever Done Any Of The Following Things Because You Were Afraid Of Youth Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Not gone to stores	4 (5%)	4 (5%)
Not gone to recreational or other fun activities	3 (4%)	6 (7%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

Responses displayed in Table 61 indicate that following the gang educational presentation, more youth indicated that they had taken various precautionary measures because of fear of gangs. Before the presentation, 22% of surveyed youth said they had not gone to certain areas of the community because they were afraid of gangs, and this rose to 33% following the presentation. Also, 18% of youth said before the presentation that they had not gone out at night because they feared gangs, and this jumped to 31% after the presentation.

One precautionary measure exhibiting a reported decrease was carrying a weapon. Before the presentation, 10% of respondents said they had carried a weapon because of fear of gangs, and this fell to 5% after the presentation. There are several possible explanations for the responses to this question. One possibility is that information provided during the presentation increased the level of fear of gangs among youth to such an extent that in the brief period between the pre- and post-tests (approximately one week), their actual behavior changed and they took more precautionary measures. A corollary to this explanation would be that fewer youth reported carrying a weapon because the presentation effectively discouraged them from doing so. A second possible explanation is that information provided at the gang educational presentation heightened participants' awareness of gangs to such an extent that the participants had better recall of protective measures they had taken in the past and thus reported more such measures. This explanation has difficulty explaining the lower percentage of post-survey respondents reporting that they had carried weapons. A third possible explanation is that the presentation educated participants about what protective measures they should and should not take (e.g., avoid going to certain areas of the community, but do not carry a weapon), and with that information fresh in their minds when they completed the post-survey, the respondents were more likely to provide answers consistent with what they had just learned. *(A fourth possible explanation is that many youth in the post-survey group were different than youth in the pre-survey group, though this is not believed to be the case.)*

Table 62: Which Of The Following Do You Think Would Help Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Explain dangers of gangs to kids	33 (40%)	49 (58%)
Teach kids how to solve problems without violence	32 (39%)	42 (49%)
Don't know	31 (37%)	23 (27%)
Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs	28 (34%)	34 (40%)
Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join	28 (34%)	44 (52%)
More police patrols & surveillance	27 (33%)	42 (49%)
Make neighborhoods safer so gangs aren't needed for protection	27 (33%)	38 (45%)
More job training for kids	26 (31%)	31 (37%)
More jobs for kids	25 (30%)	31 (37%)
Adult mentors for kids in bad family situations	24 (29%)	30 (35%)
More arrests, prosecution, & punishment of gangs	23 (28%)	38 (45%)
Police & agencies reaching out to help kids with problems	23 (28%)	35 (41%)
More after-school, evening, & weekend activities for kids	20 (24%)	30 (35%)
Change schools so kids do better & don't need gang support	17 (21%)	31 (37%)
Other	4 (5%)	5 (6%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

Information in Table 62 shows that following the gang educational presentation, higher percentages of respondents selected all items listed on the survey as possible means of preventing youth from joining gangs, and a lower percentage of respondents stated that they did not know how to help prevent youth from joining gangs. This suggests that information provided about preventive strategies during the presentation was absorbed and at least initially retained.

There were also some differences in the relative importance assigned to various preventive strategies before and after the presentation. Among both the pre- and post-survey groups, explaining dangers of gangs to kids and teaching kids how to solve problems without violence were ranked very high by respondents. However, helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs; more police patrols and surveillance; making neighborhoods safer so gangs aren't needed for protection; more arrests, prosecution, and punishment of gangs; and police and agencies reaching out to help kids with problems all received much more support on

the post-survey than on the pre-survey. With the exception of helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure, these are all criminal justice system responses. Since the educational presentation was conducted by the Department of Attorney General, it is possible that criminal justice strategies were emphasized and were fresh in the minds of respondents when they completed the post-survey.

Table 63: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gang?		
<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Going to the State Training School	29 (35%)	46 (54%)
Getting older & losing interest in the gang	29 (35%)	40 (47%)
Advice/pressure from girlfriend/ boyfriend	28 (34%)	43 (51%)
Advice/pressure from adult they respect	28 (34%)	40 (47%)
Advice/pressure from family member or other relative	28 (34%)	38 (45%)
Finding something they're really good at	26 (31%)	25 (29%)
Getting a job	25 (30%)	28 (33%)
Doing better in school	25 (30%)	27 (32%)
Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs	25 (30%)	38 (45%)
Getting arrested	24 (29%)	45 (53%)
Joining a sports or recreation program	20 (24%)	27 (32%)
Other	7 (8%)	5 (6%)
* Percentages based on 83 pre-surveys and 85 post surveys. More than 1 choice could be selected.		

As displayed in Table 63, higher percentages of post-survey respondents than pre-survey respondents selected most reasons listed to explain why youth might quit gangs. The one exception was finding something the gang member is really good at. One reason for quitting gangs that received notably more support after the gang educational presentation was getting arrested, which was checked by 29% of pre-survey respondents and 53% of post-survey respondents. Since the educational presentation was conducted by the Department of Attorney General, it is possible that the importance of making arrests was emphasized.

Table 64: Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Your City Such As Community Service?

<i>Responses</i>	Providence Pre-Survey	Providence Post-Survey
Yes	5 (8%)	7 (9%)
No	19 (29%)	48 (59%)
Don't Know	42 (64%)	27 (33%)
TOTAL	66 (100%)	82 (100%)

Table 64 reveals that after the gang educational presentation, the percentage of respondents stating that youth gangs do not do any good for their city nearly doubled, from 29% to 59%. It appears that the presentation caused 30% of respondents to change from saying that they don't know if gangs do any good to saying that gangs do not do any good.

Summary Of Findings

1. Following the youth gang educational presentation, there was a decrease both in the percentage of youth who believe gangs are a really serious or somewhat of a problem (*from 56% for the pre-survey group to 51% for the post-survey group*), and also a decrease in the percentage of youth who believe gangs aren't much of a problem (*from 28% for the pre-survey group to 16% for the post-survey group*). This is explained by the fact that the percentage of youth who said they don't know whether gangs are a problem jumped from 18% for pre-survey respondents to 33% for post-survey respondents. These responses suggest that the presentation caused participants to think about youth gangs in a different way than they had previously, perhaps challenging their beliefs and redefining terms, which created uncertainty.
2. Youth opinions about whether it is cool to be in a gang changed significantly following the gang educational presentation. Prior to the presentation, 16% of the youth surveyed said yes it's cool to be in a gang and 46% said no it isn't. Following the presentation, only 2% of respondents said it's cool to be in a gang, while 77% said no it isn't. Presumably information provided during the presentation convinced a number of youth who previously thought otherwise that being in a gang is not cool.
3. Prior to the gang educational presentation, 70% of youth said they had friends who were gang members and 18% said they did not. Following the presentation, the percentage of youth saying they had friends who were gang members decreased to 57%, and the

percentage of youth saying they did not have friends who were gang members rose to 22%. In addition, the percentage of youth saying they weren't sure whether they had friends who were gang members increased from 12% before the presentation to 21% after the presentation. These responses suggest that information provided during the presentation may have caused youth to narrow their definition of gang membership and exclude some friends who were previously regarded as members, while also creating more uncertainty about whether other friends were members.

4. Prior to the gang educational presentation, 12% of youth said their friends would respect them more if they joined a gang and 12% said their friends would respect them less. Following the presentation, the percentage of youth who said that joining a gang would cause their friends to respect them more dropped to 7%, and the percentage stating that their friends would respect them less climbed to 21%. This suggests that the presentation did convince some youth that joining a gang would not bring them more respect. Both before and after the presentation, approximately three-quarters of youth respondents said either that joining a gang wouldn't change what their friends thought of them or that they weren't sure whether friends' opinions would change. This suggests that for most youth, perceived opinions of friends' respect would not be a major factor in a decision about whether or not to join a gang.
5. Following the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth who believed that being in a gang makes getting into trouble more likely jumped from 57% to 74%. This suggests that information provided during the presentation effectively convinced many youth that being in a gang could have negative consequences.
6. After the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth who believed that joining a gang brings more safety and protection decreased from 16% to 2%, while the percentage who believed that it is safer not to join a gang increased dramatically from 21% to 41%. These responses suggest that the presentation convinced many youth that they would be safer if they did not join a gang.
7. The percentage of youth who believed that there were gang members in their school decreased from 66% to 52% after the gang educational presentation, and the percentage of youth who weren't sure whether their school had gang members increased from 26% to 41%. This is consistent with responses to other questions suggesting that the presentation

caused youth to more narrowly define the terms gang and gang member, which resulted in more uncertainty about who is and is not a gang member.

8. Following the gang educational presentation, the percentage of youth stating that they were very or somewhat worried about getting hurt at school by gangs doubled from 17% to 34%. Correspondingly, the percentage of youth who said they were not at all worried was cut in half from 54% to 27%. This suggests that the presentation convinced many youth that the presence of gangs at their school posed a threat to their well-being.
9. After the gang educational presentation, the percentage of respondents stating that youth gangs do not do any good for their city nearly doubled, from 29% to 59%. It appears that the presentation caused 30% of respondents to change from saying that they don't know if gangs do any good to saying that gangs do not do any good.

***NOTE:** It is possible that one reason for differences in responses between the pre- and post-survey groups is that many of the youth in the two groups were different. It is not believed that this was the case, but because the surveys were anonymous, and because pre-surveying was not done on the same day as the gang educational presentation and post-surveying, the possibility cannot be totally discounted.*

Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Perceptions About Gangs

Some questions on the Rhode Island law enforcement survey and the youth survey were the same. This chapter compares law enforcement and youth responses to those questions. (See previous chapters entitled “*Law Enforcement Responses To A Rhode Island Survey About Youth Gangs*” and “*Youth Perceptions Of Youth Gangs & Their Impact*” for more detailed information about law enforcement and youth survey responses.)

Table 65: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses						
Response Group	Youth gangs are a really serious problem	Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem	Youth gangs aren't much of a problem	Youth gangs aren't any problem	I don't know	Total
Law Enforcement	1 (3%)	4 (12%)	13 (39%)	15 (45%)	0	33 (100%)
Youth	81 (24%)	82 (24%)	70 (21%)	32 (10%)	71 (21%)	336 (100%)

Table 65 appears to indicate that Rhode Island law enforcement agencies and youth surveyed for this study have very different perceptions about the seriousness of the youth gang problem. Only 15% of law enforcement agencies but 48% of youth said youth gangs are a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem. And 84% of law enforcement agencies but only 31% of youth said gangs aren't much or any problem. However, these apparent differences between law enforcement agencies and youth may be misleading. Law enforcement agencies from throughout Rhode Island were surveyed, but youth surveyed were nearly all from six communities where youth gangs are thought to be most prevalent. If the six targeted communities were accurately identified, it is logical that youth surveyed from those communities believe youth gangs are a problem. It is also logical that law enforcement agencies from other communities where youth gangs are not prevalent do not regard gangs as problematic.

Table 66: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids Join Youth Gangs? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses

<i>Response</i>	<i>Law Enforcement (n = 27)</i>		<i>Youth (n = 343)</i>	
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>
Kids join because friends are in the gang	1	18 (67%)	2	212 (62%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere	1	18 (67%)	11	132 (38%)
Kids think being in a gang will protect them from others	3	17 (63%)	3	173 (50%)
Kids think they will be more important if they join a gang	3	17 (63%)	10	133 (39%)
Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join	5	16 (59%)	1	227 (66%)
Kids think being in a gang will get them more respect	8	13 (48%)	5	165 (48%)
Kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang	13	7 (26%)	4	165 (48%)

Both the law enforcement and youth surveys contained a list of possible reasons why youth join gangs. Respondents were asked to select all of the reasons that they thought were applicable. Table 66 displays the reasons ranked highest by law enforcement agencies and by youth, and there are similarities and differences. Three reasons were ranked in the top five by both groups:

- < *Kids join because friends are in the gang.*
- < *Kids think being in a gang will protect them from others.*
- < *Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join.*

Two reasons highly ranked by law enforcement as explanations for gang membership were not regarded by youth as important motivations: *kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere*, and *kids think they will be more important if they join a gang*. Two reasons highly ranked by youth were not regarded by law enforcement as especially important: *kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang* and *kids think being in a gang will get them more respect*.

Table 67: Which Of The Following Activities Do You Think Gang Members Do Together? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses				
<i>Response</i>	<i>Law Enforcement (n = 29)</i>		<i>Youth (n = 343)</i>	
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>
Hang out on the streets	1	18 (62%)	1	299 (87%)
Drink beer	2	16 (55%)	4	250 (73%)
Do drugs	2	16 (55%)	3	265 (77%)
Do graffiti	2	16 (55%)	8	223 (65%)
Sell drugs	5	15 (52%)	5	248 (72%)
Fight with other gangs and people	10	8 (28%)	2	272 (79%)

Law enforcement and youth survey respondents were asked to identify activities that they believe youth gang members engage in together. Both surveys contained a list of activities, and respondents could check all that they thought were applicable. Table 67 displays the activities most frequently selected, and there was considerable agreement between law enforcement and youth. Four activities were ranked in the top five by both groups:

- < *Gang members hang out on the streets.*
- < *Gang members drink beer.*
- < *Gang members do drugs.*
- < *Gang members sell drugs.*

Doing graffiti was ranked much higher by law enforcement than by youth. *Fighting with other gangs and people* was the second most frequently identified activity by youth, but only the tenth ranked activity by law enforcement.

Table 68: Which Of The Following Would Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses				
<i>Response</i>	<i>Law Enforcement (n = 34)</i>		<i>Youth (n = 343)</i>	
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>
More after-school, evening, and weekend activities	1	27 (79%)	8	149 (43%)
Teach kids how to solve problems without using violence	2	22 (65%)	3	175 (51%)
Provide adult mentors for kids who are in bad family situations	3	21 (62%)	11	137 (40%)

Table 68: Which Of The Following Would Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses				
<i>Response</i>	<i>Law Enforcement (n = 34)</i>		<i>Youth (n = 343)</i>	
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>
Improve family life so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families	3	21 (62%)	7	150 (44%)
Explain the dangers of gangs to kids	5	20 (59%)	1	214 (62%)
Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs	6	19 (56%)	2	180 (52%)
Provide more jobs for kids	7	18 (53%)	4	157 (46%)
More police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity	11	13 (38%)	5	155 (45%)

Table 68 displays law enforcement and youth responses to a question asking respondents to select from a list of factors that might prevent youth from joining gangs. Respondents could select as many factors as they thought were applicable, and the table shows the most frequently selected choices. Only two preventive strategies were ranked in the top five by both law enforcement agencies and youth:

- < *Teaching kids how to solve problems without using violence; and*
- < *Explaining the dangers of gangs to kids.*

The gang prevention strategy most frequently selected by law enforcement agencies was *more after-school, evening, and weekend activities*, but youth respondents did not regard that approach as particularly effective. Other gang prevention strategies highly ranked by law enforcement but not by youth were *providing adult mentors for kids who are in bad family situations* and *improving family life so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families*.

Gang prevention strategies ranked high by youth but not so high by law enforcement agencies included *helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs* and *providing more jobs for kids*. Interestingly, *more police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity* was the fifth most frequently selected strategy by youth, but only the eleventh most frequently selected strategy by law enforcement. The opposite might have been expected.

Table 69: Which Of The Following Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gangs? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses

<i>Response</i>	<i>Law Enforcement (n = 33)</i>		<i>Youth (n = 343)</i>	
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. & %</i>
Advice/pressure from an adult they respect	1	23 (70%)	5	153 (45%)
Getting older and losing interest in the gang	1	23 (70%)	9	144 (42%)
Finding something they're really good at (music, art, etc.)	3	20 (61%)	3	159 (46%)
Getting a job	3	20 (61%)	7	147 (43%)
Joining a sports or recreation program	5	19 (58%)	11	121 (35%)
Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs	6	18 (55%)	1	176 (51%)
Advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend	8	12 (36%)	4	155 (45%)
Advice/pressure from a family member or other relative	9	11 (33%)	2	160 (47%)

Law enforcement and youth surveys provided a list of factors that might cause youth gang members to quit their gangs and asked respondents to select as many of those factors as they thought were applicable. Table 69 displays the factors most frequently selected by both groups. Only two were ranked in the top five by both law enforcement agencies and youth:

- < *Advice/pressure from an adult the youth gang member respects; and*
- < *The youth gang member finding something s/he is good at (e.g., music, art).*

Maturation – *getting older and losing interest in the gang* – was one of two factors most frequently selected by law enforcement, but youth did not give it a high rank. This may be because youth respondents have not yet experienced the maturational process and are not familiar with its effects. *Getting a job* and *joining a sports or recreation program* were other factors ranked high by law enforcement but not by youth.

The factor most frequently selected by youth was *hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs*, but this was only the sixth ranked law enforcement factor. Youth also placed more importance than did law enforcement on the value of *advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend* and *advice/pressure from a family member or other relative* as means of convincing gang members to quit their gang.

Table 70: Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Your City Such As Community Service Activities? Comparison Of Law Enforcement & Youth Responses

Response Group	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	0 (0%)	22 (76%)	7 (24%)	29 (100%)
<i>Youth</i>	19 (6%)	163 (51%)	138 (43%)	320 (100%)

Table 70 displays responses from law enforcement agencies and youth to a survey question asking whether youth gangs do any good for their city such as community service projects. More than three-quarters of law enforcement agencies (76%) and approximately one-half of youth respondents (51%) said gangs do not do any good. No law enforcement agencies and only 6% of youth said gangs do some good. Youth survey respondents were much less certain than law enforcement about whether youth gangs do any good, with more than four out of ten youth respondents (43%) and approximately one-quarter of law enforcement agencies (24%) saying they don't know.

Summary Of Findings

1. Youth who were surveyed perceived youth gangs to be a much more serious problem than did Rhode Island law enforcement agencies. Forty-eight percent of youth but only 15% of law enforcement agencies said that youth gangs are a really serious problem or somewhat of a problem. However, youth surveyed were from six communities where youth gangs are thought to be most prevalent, while law enforcement agencies from throughout Rhode Island were surveyed. It is logical that law enforcement agencies in cities and towns other than the six targeted communities would not regard youth gangs as much of a problem.
2. Law enforcement agencies and youth agreed that three primary reasons why youth join gangs are: (a) kids join because friends are in the gang; (b) kids think being in a gang will protect them from others; and (c) kids hang out with gang members and decide to join.
3. Law enforcement agencies and youth agreed that activities most commonly engaged in by youth gang members include: (a) hanging out on the streets; (b) drinking beer; (c) doing drugs; and (d) selling drugs.
4. Perceptions were somewhat different among law enforcement agencies and youth about strategies that would prevent youth from joining gangs. Both groups ranked two strategies very high: (a) teaching kids how to solve problems without using violence; and (b)

explaining the dangers of gangs to kids. Gang prevention strategies ranked more highly by law enforcement agencies than by youth were after-school activities, adult mentors, and improved family life. Strategies ranked more highly by youth than by law enforcement agencies were helping kids learn how to say no to peer pressure, jobs, and more police patrols and surveillance. It is perhaps surprising that youth have more confidence than do law enforcement agencies in the value of increased police presence as an anti-gang strategy.

5. There were somewhat differing perceptions among law enforcement agencies and youth with regard to factors that might cause gang members to quit their gangs. Both groups ranked the following factors high: (a) advice/pressure from an adult the youth gang member respects; and (b) the youth gang member finding something s/he is good at (e.g., music or art). Law enforcement agencies also gave high rankings to getting older and losing interest in the gang, getting a job, and joining a sports or recreation program, but youth rankings of these factors were not so high. Youth gave higher rankings than law enforcement to hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs, advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend, and advice/pressure from a family member or other relative.
6. Youth were less certain than law enforcement agencies about whether youth gangs do any good such as community service projects for their city or town. More than four out of ten youth respondents (43%) compared with approximately one-quarter of law enforcement agencies (24%) said they don't know whether youth gangs do any good for their community. No law enforcement agencies and only 6% of youth said that gangs do good, and approximately three-quarters of law enforcement agencies (76%) and one-half of youth respondents (51%) said that youth gangs do not do any good for their community.

Rhode Island Training School Youth Gang Survey

In April 2001, John Reis, Crime Prevention Specialist for the Rhode Island Department of the Attorney General, conducted a gangs and violence survey of a sample of youth at the Rhode Island Training School. The Rhode Island Training School is the state's only secure correctional facility for delinquent and criminal youth. There were a total of eighty respondents to the survey. Following are selected results.

Table 71: Have you ever been hurt physically by a gang member or a group of gang members?

Yes	No	Total
30 (38%)	50 (62%)	80 (100%)

Thirty Rhode Island Training School respondents (38%) said they have been hurt physically by gang members. Comments of youth describing these incidents suggest that the injuries all occurred during street incidents, not during incarceration at the Training School.

Table 72: Did you receive medical treatment for injuries caused by gang members?

Yes	No	Total
7 (23%)	23 (77%)	30 (100%)

Of the thirty Training School residents who reported being physically hurt by gang members, seven (23%) said they received medical treatment for their injuries.

Table 73: Did you report the gang incident to the police?

Yes	No	Total
2 (7%)	27 (93%)	29 (100%)

Only two Training School respondents (7%) said they told police they had been injured by gang members.

Table 74: Descriptions Of Gang Incidents That Resulted In Injuries

1.	My gang was at a party, and a rival gang had another party next door. One of the rival gang's sisters was throwing the party we were at, so we were unwanted. Instead of them asking us to leave or us leaving, we fought. ... I was hurt with a bottle and my honey was beaten with a bat.
2.	I was alone when three members of a rival gang asked to do business. During business my only color is green, so I conducted business. After the agreement was made, there was an altercation over the quality of the product. I was cut and ran off. I came back ... and beat the kids and robbed them.
3.	I got shot in the leg, two black eyes, and they tried to hurt my family.
4.	I was shot in the arm and back in a gang fight.
5.	I bumped into a kid I had had a conflict with. We started rumbling one on one. But then a few of his friends jumped in with some sucker stuff. It's all good now, because all I had was some bumps on my head and another one on my face and fractured ribs.
6.	I was drinking with some homies, and they came through busting at us, so we busted back. I fractured an ankle and let it heal by itself.
7.	Once I was chilling on the block and was shot at several times.
8.	I got jumped by other gang members twice. They kicked my face and then hit me with a baseball bat on my back.
9.	I was punched in the eye when they tried to steal my truck. I reached under my seat for my gun, put it in the other person's face, and shot the gun. When I took off, the other gang members shot at me and put four bullets in the truck.
10.	I was at a club, and a kid tried to shoot me, but I pistol whipped him with my gun. When we left, the kids chased me and my boys, so we pulled over and started fighting. One kid hit me with a bat, but I only had a busted head. I got them back a couple of weeks later. One of the kids got shot three times. Whenever they see me they know not to mess with me.
11.	I'm not in a gang, but I guess someone thought I was someone else. They grabbed me in an alley way, beat me, and tried to strangle me. I did not receive medical treatment because of too many questions. The police don't care; they would think it was over drugs.
12.	I was bleeding on my head, now I think I suffer from hearing voices that try to make me do bad, like hitting people or hurting someone. I've seen a lot of people get hurt and killed in front of my face. I got hit with a bat and thrown out of a car.
13.	I was stabbed in the foot.
14.	I was jumped by another gang just because of who I am and because my brother's in a gang that fights with them, so I got banged up.
15.	I got shot in my thigh and could not walk for awhile.
16.	I got jumped by three guys with a metal bat.
17.	I was jumped because my cousin was in a gang and did something wrong. I fought back and they asked me if I wanted to join. I told them no, and to this day they still have an opening for me. I'm not going to join though.
18.	I was in a gangbang in Providence over drug money, and I got caught in the middle of it. The only thing that happened physically is that my foot got run over by a getaway car. I ended up with two broken toes, a bruised foot, and a sprained ankle.

The preceding table provides descriptive comments by Rhode Island Training School residents about gang incidents in which they suffered injuries. One of the most distressing aspects of these descriptions is the casual acceptance of violence as a routine part of everyday life. For example:

- *“...a kid tried to shoot me, but I pistol whipped him with my gun.... One kid hit me with a bat, but I only had a busted head. One of the kids got shot three times.”*
- *“I reached under my seat for my gun, put it in the other person’s face, and shot the gun. When I took off, the other gang members shot at me and put four bullets in the truck.”*
- *“I was bleeding on my head, now I think I suffer from hearing voices that try to make me do bad, like hitting people or hurting someone. I’ve seen a lot of people get hurt and killed in front of my face. I got hit with a bat and thrown out of a car.”*

Some of these remarks sound like extracts from pulp fiction stories. They do not sound like comments from youth who have hopes of leading long, healthy, and happy lives.

Summary Of Findings

1. Nearly 40% of a sample of youth surveyed at the Rhode Island Training School, the state’s only secure correctional facility for delinquent and criminal youth, said they have been physically injured by gang members. Comments by youth describing these incidents suggest that the injuries all occurred during street incidents, not during incarceration at the Training School.
2. Fewer than 25% of Training School youth who indicated that they have been physically injured by gang members said they received medical treatment for their injuries.
3. Fewer than 10% of Training School youth who indicated that they have been physically injured by gang members said they reported the incidents to the police.
4. Comments by Training School youth describing the incidents in which they were injured by gang members reflect a distressingly casual acceptance of violence, gunplay, and physical harm as routine parts of everyday life.

Best National Practices In Anti-Gang Programming

In order to help determine how Rhode Island might best respond to the problem of youth gangs, research about effective anti-gang strategies was reviewed. Anti-gang strategies may be classified in different ways. This report borrows from the classification found in Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, a summary published by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in August 2000. Classification categories are:

- *Prevention Programs*
- *Intervention Programs*
- *Suppression Programs*
- *Strategies Using Multiple Techniques*
- *Multiagency Initiatives*
- *Comprehensive Approaches to Gang Problems*
- *Legislation*

◆ **Prevention Programs:** The goal of gang prevention programs is to keep youth from joining gangs. These programs can be targeted at the entire adolescent population or they can be targeted at youth believed to be at especially high risk for joining gangs. Targeting prevention efforts at high risk youth is problematic, because so many risk factors for gang membership have been identified that it is difficult to establish priorities. (Howell, Youth Gangs: An Overview, 1998, pp. 6 & 7). Following are examples of various gang prevention programs mentioned in research literature. Some programs have been evaluated and others have not.

- ***House of Umoja*** – This grassroots, family-centered program began in Philadelphia in the 1970s. It employs a family model with components including reparenting (adults who act as parents); socialization through which youth develop strong, healthy identities; conflict resolution and problem-solving; individual learning; emphasis on work as a virtue; emphasis on service to others; a spiritual or ideological context expressed in familial rituals; and leadership training and development. A 1999 assessment by the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise determined that the House of Umoja was effective as

a youth development program, but effectiveness as a gang prevention program has not been determined. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 6)

- **Community Outreach Program** – The St. Paul, Minnesota Police Department operates a program that diverts first-time offenders and conducts school liaison work in the Southeast Asian community. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 7)
 - **Montreal Preventive Treatment Program** – Early childhood risk factors for gang involvement are addressed by targeting boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds who are disruptive in kindergarten. The boys receive training in prosocial skills and self-control. The training is conducted in small groups that include nondisruptive boys. Parents receive training in monitoring their children’s behavior, giving positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior, using punishment effectively, and managing family crises. An evaluation showed that compared with a control group, significantly fewer boys in the treatment group were gang members at age 15. (Esbensen, Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement, 2000, p. 8; Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 7)
 - **Antibullying Programs** – The need for protection is a reason cited by some gang members for joining a gang, so antibullying programs may be effective gang prevention strategies. An evaluation of an antibullying program in Bergen, Norway found that the prevalence of bullying victims decreased substantially, though impact on joining gangs was not assessed. The program included a booklet for school personnel describing bullying problems and how to address them, an informational packet for families about bullying with advice for parents, a videocassette depicting bullying episodes, and a bullying questionnaire. Adaptations of the program in England and South Carolina were not as successful. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 10 & 11)
 - **Se Puede (“You Can”)** – This program operates in Alamo, Pharr, and San Juan, Texas, where there are approximately 5,000 gang members. Goals are to prevent middle school youth from becoming involved with gangs, gun violence, and drugs. Program components include individual and group counseling, positive alternatives and role models, a prevention curriculum, and monthly weekend camping experiences. An evaluation showed a decrease in gang involvement among participants despite an increase in the number of gangs in the area. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 10 & 11)
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- ***Gang Resistance Is Paramount*** – The G.R.I.P. program in Paramount, California has three components: neighborhood meetings providing parents with support and assistance; courses for second and fifth grade students in graffiti, peer pressure, tattoos, impact of gang activity on the family, drug abuse, and alternative activities; and a school-based follow-up program in ninth grade. Three studies show that participants develop negative attitudes toward and stay out of gangs. In a long-term follow-up study, 96% of more than 3,000 program participants were not identified as gang members in police records. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 11)
- ***Gang Resistance Education And Training Program*** – The G.R.E.A.T. program was developed in 1991 by police officers from Phoenix, Mesa, Glendale, and Tempe, Arizona, and by special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. G.R.E.A.T. is a low intensity program administered to as large a population as possible. Law enforcement officers teach a nine-week course to middle school students, with the curriculum including crime victims and their rights, cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution, meeting basic social needs without joining a gang, drugs, personal responsibility, and goal setting. Preliminary results of a national evaluation found that G.R.E.A.T. appeared to be meeting its objective of reducing gang affiliation and delinquent activity. Students completing G.R.E.A.T. reported lower levels of gang affiliation and delinquency than did comparison students. Differences were small but statistically significant. Participants also had lower rates of delinquency and more positive attitudes toward the police. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 11 & 12; Esbensen & Osgood, National Evaluation of G.R.E.A.T. NIJ Research Brief, 1997)
- ***Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach*** – The Boys & Girls Clubs of America sponsors a community-wide gang prevention program. Community leaders and club staff are mobilized to discuss local gang issues and develop strategies and alternatives. Police departments, schools, and community organizations recruit youth into club programs through direct outreach and a referral network with the courts. Programs are offered in character and leadership development; education and career development; health and life skills; the arts; and sports, fitness, and recreation. Through a case management process, staff document monthly progress in areas such as academic performance and involvement

in the juvenile justice system. An initial evaluation found improvement in grades and school attendance. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 12 & 13)

◆ **Intervention Programs:** Intervention programs are targeted at existing gangs and gang members. Their goals are to reduce the level of criminal behavior by gangs and to have youth quit gangs. Intervention programs usually have a social service focus rather than an arrest and prosecution focus. Following are examples of various gang intervention programs mentioned in research literature. Some of these programs have been evaluated and others have not.

- **Detached Workers** – Detached worker programs use street workers to provide services to gang members on their own turf. Services may include counseling, advocacy, tutoring, employment assistance, and sports activities. Objectives are to lure members away from gangs and/or to change the gang from a criminal organization into a pro-social group. Perhaps surprisingly, some evaluations have found this approach to be ineffective or even counterproductive. Based on an evaluation of a California detached worker program, Klein concluded that group programming with gangs may lead to increased gang cohesion and criminal activity (Klein, 1995a cited in Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 15).

In the late 1960s, a project was implemented in East Los Angeles to test Klein's belief that gang criminal activity could be reduced through programming that worked with individual gang members but did not work with the gang as an organized group and therefore did not strengthen gang cohesion. An evaluation of the project found that group cohesion was reduced by approximately 40% and gang member arrests were reduced by 35%, though the decrease in arrests appeared to be largely due to a decrease in the number of gang members. Within several years gang criminal activity had grown back to pre-project levels. It was theorized that while project services had short-term positive impact, they treated symptoms rather than underlying community issues, and thus the effects were not long-lasting (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 16).

It has been suggested that one reason some evaluations have not found detached worker programs to be effective is that the objectives are not always clear. Is the project intended to control gangs, address problems of individual members, provide access to positive opportunities, change values, or reduce delinquency? (Klein, 1971; Spergel 1966 cited in Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 16).

- ***Crisis Intervention*** – Crisis intervention programs usually involve sending teams to areas where gang problems are most likely to erupt during the evening and night. These teams attempt to defuse crises, mediate conflicts, and engage gang members in follow-up services. Evaluations of crisis intervention programs have found mixed results. It appears that this strategy may be most successful when neighborhood groups play an active role and collaboration occurs with juvenile justice and other agencies. One example is the Chicago Crisis Intervention Services Project, which was evaluated by Spergel (1986) and found to reduce the most serious and violent crimes, but not overall crime levels. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 16,17)
- ***Boys & Girls Clubs Outreach Project*** – The Boys & Girls Clubs of America has supported a gang intervention project in Fort Worth, Texas called *Comin' Up*. All participants are identified gang members, and individual needs assessments are conducted by a team that includes parents, police, school staff, juvenile probation officers, and Boys & Girls Clubs staff. Services include education, employment, and life skills development. Successful participants are employed as outreach workers. Criminal arrest data showed a significant decrease in violence in the area served by the project, but there has not been an independent evaluation. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 17).
- ***Job Training And Employment*** – Research suggests that providing jobs to gang members can reduce gang criminal activity and draw members away from gangs. One study found that many gang members would quit selling drugs if they had a legitimate job with reasonable wages, and that many gang members would accept wages comparable to those in fast food restaurants (Huff, 1998:7 cited in Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 17). A review of serious and violent juvenile offender programs by Lipsey and Wilson (1998) concluded that paid employment reduced recidivism among offenders who were not incarcerated. Examples of this approach are Homeboy Industries and Jobs for a Future in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles (Gaouette, 1997 cited in Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 17). These projects place gang members in jobs and employ gang members to merchandise tee-shirts and sell baked bread to a commercial bakery. Proceeds from these enterprises are used to help support an alternative school for gang members and a tattoo-removal service. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 17)

- ***Violence-Free Zones*** – The Violence-Free Zone model developed by the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) attempts to address the relationship between breakdown of the family structure and gang involvement. Many youth gang members come from fatherless homes where single working mothers lack time to adequately supervise their children. Violence-Free Zone adult workers provide reparenting, mentoring, job training, and social development. A 1999 NCNE publication describes the steps necessary to implement a Violence-Free Zone (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 17,18).
- ***Victim Intervention*** – Victim intervention programs identify gang members who are victims of gang violence and refer them into services that encourage them to quit gangs. A project in Cleveland, Ohio provides gang recognition training for hospital emergency room staff who refer injured gang members for medical and social services. Through the Child Development-Community Policing project in New Haven, Connecticut, police refer gang and other victims of violence to counseling services. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 19).
- ***Gang Members In Juvenile Correctional Facilities*** – A survey by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found that few juvenile correctional institutions use assessment techniques to identify incarcerated youth gang members or provide specific anti-gang programming. Research and evaluation suggest that strategies which may be effective with youth gang members in correctional facilities or in aftercare include the following: (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 20,21)
 - Interpersonal skills training;
 - The Aggression Replacement Training (ART) model, which teaches gang members how to control their anger;
 - Gang awareness curriculums to help youth avoid gang involvement while incarcerated;
 - Use of risk and needs assessments at intake to identify gang members and their particular needs;
 - Coordination of juvenile correctional gang programs with community-based gang prevention and intervention programs; and

- The Lifeskills '95 aftercare program in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California, which serves offenders released from the California Youth Authority, and which reduced the frequency of gang contacts among participants.

◆ **Suppression Programs:** Like intervention programs, suppression programs are targeted at existing gangs. The difference is that while intervention programs provide services to gang members, suppression programs are characterized by a criminal justice system response through arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. Following are examples of gang suppression programs:

- **Operation Hardcore** – Operation Hardcore is a prosecutorial gang suppression program operated by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Its features include vertical prosecution (the prosecutor who files the case handles it throughout the process), small caseloads, extra investigative support, and victim assistance. An evaluation by Dahmann found fewer dismissals; more convictions/adjudications, including more convictions/adjudications on the most serious charge; and a higher rate of incarceration than for other cases. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 21,22)
- **Los Angeles Police Department Operation Cul-De-Sac** - The LAPD put up traffic barriers in neighborhoods with large numbers of gangs and significant gang crime. Major roads were closed, creating cul-de-sacs that reduced the mobility of gangs and made crimes such as drive-by shootings more difficult. A study by Lasley found that gang-related homicides and assaults in the targeted areas decreased while the program was operating and increased when the program ended. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 23)
- **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Operation Safe Streets** – Teams of gang investigators investigate the most active gang in the team's area. Investigation and arrest is combined with vertical prosecution and intensive probation supervision. Investigators develop rapport with gang members through regular contact, which helps with investigation and also enables investigators to connect gang members to needed social services and employment assistance. An evaluation by McBride found a 50% decrease in youth and adult gang activity. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 23,24)

- ***Dallas Antigang Initiative*** – The Dallas COPS (Community Oriented Policing) antigang initiative employed three strategies: (a) saturation and high-visibility patrols in targeted areas that stopped and frisked suspected gang members and made arrests; (b) aggressive curfew enforcement; and (c) aggressive enforcement of truancy laws and regulations. An evaluation found that a combination of aggressive enforcement of curfews and truancy laws was effective in reducing gang-related violence, but that saturation patrols were not effective. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 24)
- ***Geomapping and Tracking Systems*** – A number of police departments have developed sophisticated computer mapping, databases, and offender identification and tracking targeted at gangs. Examples of such programs are in Houston, Chicago, and Orange County, California. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 26)

◆ **Strategies Using Multiple Techniques:** Some communities have developed antigang programs that combine strategies such as prevention, intervention, suppression, and community policing. Such initiatives are often managed by a local task force. One example is the Reno, Nevada Community Action Team. Police officers, minority representatives, community service agencies, and political leaders are involved in a program with two strategies: (a) a specialized team of officers that targets the top 5% of violent gang offenders in a repeat offender program; and (b) a prevention and early intervention program that targets 80% of Reno's gang members who are not considered to be hardcore. Neighborhood advisory groups provide resident feedback, and a group coordinates prevention and intervention activities. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 28)

◆ **Multiagency Initiatives:** There are two general types of multiagency antigang initiatives: initiatives that involve collaboration of agencies at the local level, e.g., police, prosecutors, and courts; and initiatives that involve collaboration of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Following are examples:

- ***Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force*** – The Los Angeles task force was established after riots in 1992 that involved gangs. Task force members include the FBI; Los Angeles Police Department; and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Strategies include use of federal laws and procedures in areas such as prosecution, wiretapping, and witness

security, as well as undercover purchases of firearms and payments to informants. Long-term, proactive investigations of entire gangs distinguish this task force from more traditional short-term, reactive investigations of individual gang members by local police. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 30)

- ***Boston Police Department Gun Project And Operation Night Light*** – A multiagency task force in Boston targets gun violence by gang members through various suppression strategies. In addition, teams of police and probation officers patrol to identify gang members, enforce conditions of probation, and increase sanctions for probation and parole violations. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 30,31; Howell, Youth Gangs: An Overview, 1998, p. 14).
- ***Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET)*** – This team has members from the Orange County, California police department, sheriff's department, district attorney, and probation department. The most violent and repeat gang offenders in the most violent gangs are selectively incarcerated. These offenders are closely monitored for new offenses and receive intensive probation. A gang incident tracking system (GITS) is used to identify and track the gang members. Team members share intelligence gathering and other information to select the gangs and gang members for intervention. Evaluations of TARGET have found very positive results. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 33; Howell, Youth Gangs: An Overview, 1998, p. 14)

◆ **Comprehensive Approaches to Gang Problems:** The Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is testing a comprehensive model for reducing gang violence developed by Dr. Irving Spergel and colleagues at the University of Chicago. The model, called the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression program, is intended to mobilize community efforts by police, prosecutors, judges, probation and parole officers, corrections officers, schools, businesses, social service agencies, and grassroots organizations. The following five core strategies are implemented through an integrated, team-oriented problem-solving approach: (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 34; Howell, Youth Gangs: An Overview, 1998, p. 13).

- ***Community Mobilization*** – Including citizens, law enforcement and social service agencies, and community groups;

- **Academic, Economic, and Social Opportunities** – Including education, job programs, and life skills development;
- **Social Intervention** – Using street outreach workers to engage gang-involved youth;
- **Gang Suppression** – Including arrest, prosecution, probation, and incarceration;
- **Organizational Change and Development** – Organization and integration of the other core strategies and reallocation of resources among agencies as appropriate.

◆ **Legislation:** A variety of legislative strategies have been used by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to combat gangs. Among these are:

- **Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act:** RICO has been used against youth and adult gang members by some local prosecutors. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 40,41)
- **California Street Terrorism, Enforcement, and Prevention (STEP) Act** – Police and/or prosecutors develop evidence that a gang fits STEP's definitions, presents the information to the court, and obtains a judicial order. Targeted individuals are notified in writing that they are known gang members. STEP can then be used to enhance penalties for subsequent offenses committed by these individuals. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, p. 41)
- **City Ordinances and Court Injunctions** – Some communities have enacted measures aimed at restricting or prohibiting gang activities. Examples include banning gang members from public places such as parks where gang confrontations have occurred, and prohibiting signs of gang membership such as wearing gang colors. Cities and towns have also used or expanded existing ordinances such as nuisance abatement and loitering to restrict gang activity. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 41,42)
- **Juvenile Curfew** – Juvenile curfews have become a popular strategy for limiting gang activity. In some cases these curfews have been challenged on constitutional grounds, including the right to free assembly and equal protection against unreasonable stopping and detainment. A major constitutional objection has been that curfews violate the equal protection clause of the fourth amendment, because they establish an unjustified classification based on age and result in selective enforcement harmful to minority youth.

A Dallas, Texas curfew ordinance has been ruled by federal court to be constitutional. There has been little research on the effectiveness of juvenile curfews. (Howell, Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, 2000, pp. 42,43)

Summary Of Findings

Research and evaluation have identified a variety of effective anti-gang strategies. These strategies may be grouped into categories such as prevention, intervention, and suppression depending on the target group and the nature of the strategy. Two common themes run through much of the research:

- *It is important to mobilize as many community constituencies as possible to collaborate in development and implementation of anti-gang strategies. These constituencies include law enforcement, schools, citizens groups, parents, human service agencies, minority groups, and grassroots organizations.*
- *It is important for each community to assess the nature of its gang problems and the factors contributing to those problems in order to develop and implement strategies specifically targeted at the community's particular conditions. The urge to replicate programs that are popular in other places should be resisted until sufficient planning has been done to determine what the problems are and which strategies are most likely to be successful.*

With the above general principles in mind, the following table displays different types of effective anti-gang strategies based on the research presented in this chapter.

Category	Strategy	Program Example
<i>Prevention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reparenting (adults who act as parents) and creation of family atmosphere; 	House of Umoja - Philadelphia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood targeting of disruptive children and training in social skills and self-control; 	Montreal Preventive Treatment Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for parents of disruptive young children in monitoring their children's behavior; 	Montreal Preventive Treatment Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive programming for middle school students including individual and group counseling, positive alternatives, role models, gang prevention curriculum, and weekend experiences; 	Se Puede – Alamo, Pharr, & San Juan, Texas

Category	Strategy	Program Example
<i>Prevention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood support and assistance for parents combined with school programming and follow-up; 	G.R.I.P. – Paramount, California
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-gang school curriculum; 	G.R.E.A.T. – Phoenix, Mesa, Glendale, & Tempe, Arizona
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development and positive alternatives combined with individualized case management and collaborative outreach to and referrals from courts, police, schools, and other agencies; 	Boys & Girls Clubs Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach – National Program
<i>Intervention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night-time crisis intervention teams in areas prone to gang activity, with active involvement of neighborhood groups and juvenile justice agencies; 	Chicago Crisis Intervention Services Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized needs assessments and service delivery for gang members coordinated by a team including parents, police, school staff, probation officers, and community agency staff; 	Boys & Girls Clubs Comin' Up – Fort Worth, Texas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job training and employment; 	Homeboy Industries & Jobs For A Future – Los Angeles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to youth from fatherless homes by adult workers who provide reparenting, mentoring, job training, and social development; 	Violence-Free Zones - National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger management training, interpersonal skills training, and gang awareness education for youth in juvenile correctional institutions; 	Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Model – Brooklyn, New York
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community aftercare services for gang members released from juvenile correctional facilities; 	Lifeskills '95 Aftercare Program – San Bernardino & Riverside Counties, California
<i>Suppression</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of traffic barriers in areas with high gang activity to reduce the number of entrances and exits into the neighborhood, thus making crimes such as drive-by shootings more difficult; 	LAPD Operation Cul-De-Sac
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams investigating the most active gangs and combining arrests with vertical prosecution and intensive probation supervision; 	Operation Safe Streets - Los Angeles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geomapping, computerized databases, and offender identification and tracking targeted at gangs; 	Orange County, California

Category	Strategy	Program Example
<i>Multiagency Initiatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal/state/local proactive, long-term anti-gang task forces using federal laws in areas such as prosecution, wiretapping, and witness security, combined with use of informants and undercover purchases of firearms; 	Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police/prosecution/probation task forces that use computerized tracking systems to identify and track gang members, selectively incarcerate the most violent gang members, closely monitor those gang members for new offenses, and provide intensive probation services; 	TARGET Orange County, California
<i>Comprehensive Approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated, team-oriented problem-solving approach with a comprehensive array of strategies such as community mobilization; academic, economic, and social opportunities; social intervention; gang suppression; and organizational change and development; 	Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, & Suppression Program (Spergel Model) – Being tested in a number of communities by OJJDP
<i>Legislation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of RICO to prosecute gang members; 	Various Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State legislation targeted at gang members that can be used to enhance penalties for offenses; 	California Street Terrorism, Enforcement, and Prevention Act
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of existing and new local ordinances and court injunctions, such as nuisance abatement, loitering, and banning gang members from congregating in places where gang confrontations have occurred; 	Various Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juvenile curfew ordinances; 	Dallas, Texas

Appendices

Appendix A: References

Appendix B: Youth Survey Responses For Targeted Cities

Appendix C: Youth Gang Survey

Appendix D: Law Enforcement Gang Survey

Appendix A:

References

Appendix A: References

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The following gang survey instruments and assessments provided by the National Youth Gang Center were used to develop survey instruments for this study:

Down For The Set: Describing And Defining Gangs In San Diego. 1994. San Diego Association of Governments. Criminal Justice Research Division.

Draft Student Survey. 2000. National Youth Gang Center. Tallahassee, Florida.

Illinois Law Enforcement Survey on Gangs. 1999. Office of Illinois Attorney General. Gang Crime Prevention Center.

Program Network Survey. Office of Illinois Attorney General. Gang Crime Prevention Center.

Rural Gang Initiative. 1999. National Youth Gang Center. Tallahassee, Florida. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Youth Survey on Gangs. 1999. Neighborhood Resource Center. Rockford, Illinois.

Appendix B:
Youth Survey Responses
For Targeted Cities

Youth Survey Responses For Targeted Cities

◆ INTRODUCTION

The five cities initially targeted by the Rhode Island Justice Commission (RIJC) for the youth gang study were Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport. These communities are commonly regarded as having the highest risk factors for children and youth in Rhode Island. For example, the five cities are identified by the Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook as having higher percentages of families with children below the poverty level than any other city or town in the state. In addition, Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport participate in another RIJC program: the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Offenders*, funded through the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). In the early stages of this study, there were indications that youth gangs might be an increasing problem in Cranston, possibly as a spill-over from Providence. Therefore, Cranston became the sixth targeted city.

The primary reason the Rhode Island Justice Commission commissioned this study was to obtain insights from “normal youth” about the youth gang problem and how it impacts their lives. “Normal youth” refers to youth who are not active gang members. They attend school, though in some cases through alternative learning programs, and they are not serious or violent offenders, though they may have had minor contacts with the juvenile justice system. Ideally they are also “street-wise” and knowledgeable about the youth gang situation in their community. It was determined that the best way to access such youth was through social service agencies in the six targeted cities. Thus focus groups were conducted with youth participating in agencies’ summer and after-school programs. Focus group participants were asked to complete an anonymous survey about gangs. Since the youth surveyed are not a scientifically drawn sample of all adolescents in the targeted communities, it is not known whether the survey results accurately represent beliefs and attitudes of other youth in the communities.

Following are youth responses to key survey questions for each of the six cities.

CAUTION

Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions about individual communities from information in the following tables. Numbers of survey respondents from each city are small. In addition, respondents were not selected through a scientifically drawn sample, so their perceptions about youth gangs may not be representative of opinions of all youth in the community.

NOTE: *The following tables reflect only those youth from the six cities primarily targeted for this study. The total number of all unduplicated youth who completed gang surveys was 340, with 18 youth coming from eight other communities.*

<u>Table 1: City/Town Where Unduplicated Youth Respondents Reside</u>		
<i>City/Town</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Providence	171	53%
Pawtucket	41	13%
Central Falls	30	9%
Woonsocket	30	9%
Cranston	29	9%
Newport	21	7%
TOTAL	322	100%

Table 1 shows the number of youth survey respondents residing in each of the six Rhode Island cities targeted for this study. More than half the youth (53%) were from Providence, the state's largest city and major metropolitan area.

Table 2: Gender Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents			
<i>City</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	87 (52%)	82 (48%)	169 (100%)
Pawtucket	18 (44%)	23 (56%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	19 (63%)	11 (37%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	14 (47%)	16 (53%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	20 (69%)	9 (31%)	29 (100%)
Newport	11 (52%)	10 (48%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	169 (53%)	151 (47%)	320 (100%)

Table 2 displays the gender of youth who were surveyed from the six targeted cities. In total, 53% were female and 47% were male. The distribution in Providence and Newport was about the same as for the total sample. In Cranston and Central Falls, approximately two-thirds of respondents were female. In Pawtucket and Woonsocket there were more males than females.

Table 3: Age Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents				
<i>City</i>	<i>10 & Under</i>	<i>11-15</i>	<i>16 & Older</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	35 (21%)	109 (64%)	25 (15%)	169 (100%)
Pawtucket	2 (5%)	31 (76%)	8 (20%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	1 (3%)	28 (93%)	1 (3%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	4 (13%)	26 (87%)	0	30 (100%)
Cranston	1 (3%)	26 (90%)	2 (7%)	29 (100%)
Newport	0	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	19 (100%)
TOTAL	43 (14%)	238 (75%)	37 (12%)	318 (100%)

Three-quarters (75%) of all youth respondents from the six targeted cities were between the ages of 11 and 15. However, only Pawtucket had a similar percentage of participants in this age range. In Central Falls, Woonsocket, Cranston, and Newport, 11-15 year-olds accounted for approximately 90% or more of respondents. In Providence, nearly two-thirds of youth (64%) were 11-15; approximately one-fifth (21%) were 10 and under; and approximately one out of seven (15%) were 16 and older.

Table 4: Race/Ethnicity Of Unduplicated Youth Respondents

<i>City</i>	<i>African Amer.</i>	<i>Amer. Indian</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>SE Asian</i>	<i>Multi-Racial</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	15 (9%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	26 (15%)	105 (62%)	7 (4%)	6 (4%)	5 (3%)	169 (100%)
Pawtucket	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	8 (20%)	20 (49%)	0	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	1 (3%)	0	1 (3%)	26 (87%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	4 (13%)	0	12 (40%)	7 (23%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	0	30 (100%)
Cranston	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	15 (52%)	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	3 (10%)	0	2 (7%)	29 (100%)
Newport	7 (33%)	1 (5%)	4 (19%)	2 (10%)	0	4 (19%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	31 (10%)	7 (2%)	42 (13%)	85 (27%)	108 (34%)	18 (6%)	19 (6%)	10 (3%)	320 (100%)

In total, 34% of youth survey respondents from the six targeted cities were Southeast Asian, 27% were Hispanic, 13% were non-Hispanic white, and 10% were African American. However, the race/ethnicity distribution was very different in the different cities. Nearly all the Southeast Asian youth surveyed were from Providence. Nearly nine out of ten youth surveyed in Central Falls (87%) and half of the youth surveyed in Pawtucket (49%) were Hispanic. In Cranston, more than half of the youth surveyed (52%) were white, and in Woonsocket, four out of ten youth (40%) were white. In Newport, one out of three youth respondents (33%) were African American.

Table 5: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community?

<i>City</i>	Youth gangs are a really serious problem	Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem	Youth gangs aren't much of a problem	Youth gangs aren't any problem	I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem	<i>Total</i>
Providence	50 (30%)	36 (22%)	32 (19%)	13 (8%)	36 (22%)	167 (100%)
Pawtucket	5 (13%)	6 (16%)	11 (29%)	8 (21%)	8 (21%)	38 (100%)
Central Falls	7 (23%)	9 (30%)	9 (30%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	30 (100%)

Table 5: How Serious A Problem Do You Think Youth Gangs Are In Your Community?						
<i>City</i>	Youth gangs are a really serious problem	Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem	Youth gangs aren't much of a problem	Youth gangs aren't any problem	I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem	<i>Total</i>
Woonsocket	4 (13%)	8 (27%)	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	11 (37%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	7 (24%)	12 (41%)	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	29 (100%)
Newport	2 (10%)	4 (19%)	6 (29%)	5 (24%)	4 (19%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	75 (24%)	75 (24%)	68 (22%)	30 (10%)	67 (21%)	315 (100%)

Table 5 reveals that in total, approximately one-quarter (24%) of all youth who were surveyed in the six targeted cities said that youth gangs are a really serious problem, and the same percentage said that youth gangs are somewhat of a problem. A slightly lower percentage (22%) said youth gangs aren't much of a problem, and only one out of ten youth (10%) said youth gangs aren't any problem. Approximately one out of five youth (21%) said they don't know whether youth gangs are a problem. Providence had the highest percentage of youth (30%) stating that youth gangs are a really serious problem, followed by Cranston (24%) and Central Falls (23%). Newport had the highest percentage of youth (24%) stating that youth gangs aren't any problem, followed by Pawtucket (21%). In Woonsocket, more than one-third of youth (37%) said they don't know whether youth gangs are a problem.

Table 6: Do You Think It's Cool To Be In A Gang?				
<i>City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	16 (9%)	105 (61%)	50 (29%)	171 (100%)
Pawtucket	2 (7%)	17 (57%)	11 (37%)	30 (100%)
Central Falls	1 (3%)	20 (67%)	9 (30%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	0	36 (88%)	5 (12%)	41 (100%)
Cranston	1 (3%)	23 (79%)	5 (17%)	29 (100%)
Newport	0	20 (95%)	1 (5%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	20 (6%)	221 (69%)	81 (25%)	322 (100%)

Table 6 shows that nearly seven out of ten youth surveyed in the six communities (69%) said they don't think it's cool to be in a gang, while only 6% said gang membership is cool. One

out of four youth (25%) said they aren't sure whether it's cool to be in a gang. Providence had the highest percentage of youth stating that it is cool to be in a gang, but that was only 9%. Newport had the highest percentage of youth who said they don't think it is cool to be in a gang (95%), followed by Woonsocket (88%) and Cranston (79%). Pawtucket (37%) and Central Falls (30%) had the highest percentages of respondents stating they're not sure whether it is cool to be in a gang.

Table 7: Do You Have Friends Who Are Gang Members?				
<i>City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	97 (57%)	50 (29%)	24 (14%)	171 (100%)
Pawtucket	12 (29%)	23 (56%)	6 (15%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	14 (47%)	11 (37%)	5 (17%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	16 (53%)	8 (27%)	6 (20%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	18 (62%)	9 (31%)	2 (7%)	29 (100%)
Newport	3 (14%)	8 (38%)	10 (48%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	160 (50%)	109 (34%)	53 (16%)	322 (100%)

As Table 7 displays, half of all youth surveyed in the six cities (50%) said they have friends who are gang members. Approximately one-third of respondents (34%) said they do not have friends who are gang members, and approximately one out of six respondents (16%) said they are not sure. Cranston had the highest percentage of youth stating that they have friends who are gang members (62%), followed by Providence (57%) and Woonsocket (53%). Pawtucket had the highest percentage of youth stating that they do not have friends who are gang members (56%), followed by Newport (38%) and Central Falls (37%).

Table 8: What Would Your Friends Think If You Joined A Gang?

<i>City</i>	My friends would respect me more	My friends would respect me less	It wouldn't change what my friends think about me	Not sure	<i>Total</i>
Providence	24 (14%)	33 (19%)	49 (29%)	64 (38%)	170 (100%)
Pawtucket	3 (7%)	8 (20%)	14 (34%)	16 (39%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	5 (17%)	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	11 (37%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	2 (7%)	7 (23%)	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	1 (3%)	14 (48%)	8 (28%)	6 (21%)	29 (100%)
Newport	0	7 (33%)	5 (24%)	9 (43%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	35 (11%)	76 (24%)	93 (29%)	117 (36%)	321 (100%)

Table 8 shows that more than one out three youth (36%) surveyed in the six cities said that if they joined a gang they are not sure what their friends would think. Nearly one out of three youth (29%) said their friends' opinion of them wouldn't change. Approximately one out of four youth (24%) said their friends would respect them less. Only about one out of ten youth (11%) said that if they joined a gang their friends would respect them more. Providence (14%) had the highest percentage of respondents who thought gang membership would bring them more respect from friends. Cranston (48%) had the highest percentage of respondents who thought gang membership would cause friends to respect them less.

Table 9: Do You Think Being In A Gang Makes It More Likely You Will Get Into Trouble?

<i>City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	124 (73%)	12 (7%)	33 (20%)	169 (100%)
Pawtucket	33 (81%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	27 (90%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	13 (43%)	7 (23%)	10 (33%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	27 (93%)	0	2 (7%)	29 (100%)
Newport	14 (67%)	5 (24%)	2 (10%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	238 (74%)	28 (9%)	54 (17%)	320 (100%)

As Table 9 indicates, approximately three-quarters (74%) of all youth surveyed in the six cities said that being in a gang makes getting into trouble more likely. Cranston (93%) had the highest percentage of respondents offering this opinion, followed by Central Falls (90%).

Newport (24%) and Woonsocket (23%) had the highest percentages of youth stating that gang membership does not make getting into trouble more likely.

Table 10: Do You Think You Are Safer And Have More Protection If You Join A Gang Or If You Don't Join A Gang?

<i>City</i>	Safer and more protection if you join a gang	Safer and more protection if you don't join a gang	Same amount of safety/protection whether or not you're in a gang	I Don't Know	<i>Total</i>
Providence	18 (11%)	70 (42%)	39 (23%)	40 (24%)	167 (100%)
Pawtucket	1 (2%)	28 (68%)	7 (17%)	5 (12%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	2 (7%)	15 (50%)	9 (30%)	4 (13%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	4 (13%)	11 (37%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	2 (7%)	18 (62%)	5 (17%)	4 (14%)	29 (100%)
Newport	12 (57%)	0	4 (19%)	5 (24%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	39 (12%)	142 (45%)	70 (22%)	67 (21%)	318 (100%)

Table 10 reveals that 45% of all youth surveyed in the six cities said that they are safer and have more protection if they do not join a gang. Only 12% said that gang membership brings more safety and protection. The major exception to this opinion was in Newport, where 57% of respondents said they have more safety and protection if they join a gang. Pawtucket (68%) had the highest percentage of youth stating that there is more safety and protection by not joining a gang, followed by Cranston (62%).

Table 11: Are There Gang Members In Your School?

<i>City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Don't Go To School</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	79 (47%)	30 (18%)	57 (34%)	3 (2%)	169 (100%)
Pawtucket	12 (29%)	8 (20%)	19 (46%)	2 (5%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	19 (63%)	4 (13%)	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	16 (53%)	1 (3%)	13 (43%)	0	30 (100%)
Cranston	19 (66%)	1 (3%)	9 (31%)	0	29 (100%)
Newport	7 (33%)	5 (24%)	9 (43%)	0	21 (100%)
TOTAL	152 (48%)	49 (15%)	113 (35%)	6 (2%)	320 (100%)

As Table 11 shows, nearly half (48%) of all youth surveyed in the six communities said that there are gang members in their school. More than one-third of respondents (35%) said they are not sure, and only 15% of respondents said their school does not have gang members. Cranston had the highest percentage of youth stating that their school has gang members (66%), followed by Central Falls (63%). The lowest percentages of youth stating that their school has gang members were from Pawtucket (29%) and Newport (33%).

Table 12: How Worried Are You That You Might Get Hurt At School By Gangs?							
<i>City</i>	Very Worried	Somewhat Worried	A Little Worried	Not At All Worried	Don't Think There Are Gangs At My School	Don't Go To School	<i>Total</i>
Providence	28 (17%)	10 (6%)	24 (14%)	74 (44%)	30 (18%)	2 (1%)	168 (100%)
Pawtucket	5 (12%)	0	9 (22%)	17 (42%)	9 (22%)	1 (2%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	16 (53%)	0	3 (10%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	14 (47%)	4 (13%)	0	30 (100%)
Cranston	4 (14%)	4 (14%)	3 (10%)	15 (52%)	3 (10%)	0	29 (100%)
Newport	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	11 (52%)	7 (33%)	0	21 (100%)
TOTAL	46 (14%)	20 (6%)	47 (15%)	147 (46%)	53 (17%)	6 (2%)	319 (100%)

Table 12 indicates that nearly half of all youth surveyed in the six cities (46%) are not at all worried about getting hurt by gangs at school. Fifteen percent (15%) are a little worried, and 14% are very worried. Woonsocket had the highest percentage of respondents who are very worried about being hurt at school by gangs (20%), followed by Providence (17%). Central Falls (53%) had the highest percentage of youth who are not all worried about being harmed by gangs at school, followed by Cranston (52%) and Newport (52%).

Table 13: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number & Percentage Yes</i>						
	Providence (n = 171)	Pawtucket (n = 41)	Central Falls (n = 30)	Woonsocket (n = 30)	Cranston (n = 29)	Newport (n = 21)	Total (n = 322)
Kids hang out with gang members and decide to join	97 (57%)	27 (66%)	29 (97%)	22 (73%)	24 (83%)	14 (67%)	213 (66%)
Kids join because friends are in the gang	85 (50%)	25 (61%)	28 (93%)	16 (53%)	23 (79%)	19 (91%)	196 (61%)
Kids think being in a gang will protect them from others	74 (43%)	22 (54%)	22 (73%)	12 (40%)	17 (59%)	13 (62%)	160 (50%)
Kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang	79 (46%)	16 (39%)	15 (50%)	13 (43%)	20 (69%)	11 (52%)	154 (48%)
Kids think being in a gang will get them more respect	70 (41%)	19 (46%)	24 (80%)	13 (43%)	16 (55%)	12 (57%)	154 (48%)
Kids think being in a gang is exciting	72 (42%)	14 (34%)	23 (77%)	12 (40%)	19 (66%)	9 (43%)	149 (46%)
Kids think they will get money, drugs, or other things in a gang	65 (38%)	21 (51%)	20 (67%)	14 (47%)	17 (59%)	12 (57%)	149 (46%)
Guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang	68 (40%)	14 (34%)	18 (60%)	14 (47%)	14 (48%)	14 (67%)	142 (44%)
Gangs pressure kids to join	54 (32%)	18 (44%)	11 (37%)	12 (40%)	17 (59%)	14 (67%)	126 (39%)
Kids think they will be more important if they join a gang	45 (26%)	20 (49%)	20 (67%)	9 (30%)	17 (59%)	12 (57%)	123 (38%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong	56 (33%)	18 (44%)	14 (47%)	9 (30%)	14 (48%)	12 (57%)	123 (38%)
Girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang	52 (30%)	13 (32%)	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	13 (45%)	9 (43%)	103 (32%)
Kids think being in a gang will make them feel useful	38 (22%)	14 (34%)	13 (43%)	9 (30%)	13 (45%)	10 (48%)	97 (30%)
Kids think a gang will be like joining a happy family	42 (25%)	8 (20%)	5 (17%)	4 (13%)	9 (31%)	10 (48%)	78 (24%)

Table 13: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Explain Why Kids In Your Community Join Youth Gangs?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number & Percentage Yes</i>						
	Providence (n = 171)	Pawtucket (n = 41)	Central Falls (n = 30)	Woonsocket (n = 30)	Cranston (n = 29)	Newport (n = 21)	Total (n = 322)
Gangs recruit members	46 (27%)	7 (17%)	2 (7%)	6 (20%)	8 (28%)	6 (29%)	75 (23%)
I Don't know why kids join gangs	34 (20%)	7 (17%)	0	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	3 (14%)	51 (16%)
* More than 1 choice could be selected.							

The survey asked respondents to select from a list of reasons why youth might join gangs. The respondents were able to select as many reasons as they thought were applicable. Table 13 presents the results for the six targeted cities. For all respondents and for each individual city, the two most frequently selected reasons were related: *kids hang out with gang members and decide to join*, and *kids join because friends are in the gang*. The third most frequently selected reason for gang membership selected by all youth was *kids think being in a gang will protect them from others*, and this was also the third choice for Pawtucket respondents. For Providence and Cranston respondents, the third most frequently selected reason was *kids join because sisters or brothers are in the gang*. In Central Falls, the third choice was *kids think being in a gang will get them more respect*. In Woonsocket, the third most frequently selected reasons for gang membership were *kids think they will get money, drugs, or other things in a gang*, and *guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang*. The latter reason and *gangs pressure kids to join* were co-second choices of Newport respondents, along with *kids hang out with gang members and decide to join*.

Table 14: Have You Ever Done Any Of The Following Things Because You Were Afraid Of Gangs?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number & Percentage Yes</i>						
	Providence (n = 171)	Pawtucket (n = 41)	Central Falls (n = 30)	Woonsocket (n = 30)	Cranston (n = 29)	Newport (n = 21)	Total (n = 322)
Not gone to certain areas of the community	44 (26%)	12 (29%)	9 (30%)	2 (7%)	8 (28%)	4 (19%)	79 (25%)
Not gone out at night	35 (21%)	7 (17%)	8 (27%)	4 (13%)	7 (24%)	5 (24%)	66 (20%)
Not walked in your neighborhood	21 (12%)	8 (20%)	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	7 (24%)	7 (33%)	50 (16%)
Carried a weapon	21 (12%)	3 (7%)	4 (13%)	7 (23%)	2 (7%)	3 (14%)	40 (12%)
Not hung out with friends	17 (10%)	2 (5%)	3 (10%)	0	2 (7%)	2 (10%)	26 (8%)
Not gone to parties	15 (9%)	3 (7%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	4 (19%)	25 (8%)
Not gone to school	13 (8%)	1 (2%)	1 (3%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	2 (10%)	22 (7%)
Not gone to stores	9 (5%)	1 (2%)	2 (7%)	0	5 (17%)	1 (5%)	18 (6%)
Not gone to recreational or other fun activities	10 (6%)	2 (5%)	2 (7%)	0	1 (3%)	3 (14%)	18 (6%)
Not joined sports teams	10 (6%)	3 (7%)	1 (3%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (5%)	16 (5%)
* More than 1 choice could be selected.							

Survey respondents were asked whether fear of gangs had ever caused them to do or not do certain things. The respondents could select as many of the choices as applied. As Table 14 displays, the three actions most frequently selected by all youth in the six cities were *not gone to certain areas of the community*, *not gone out at night*, and *not walked in the neighborhood*. These were the most frequently selected choices for five of the six cities as well, though Providence youth selected *carried a weapon* as often as *not walked in the neighborhood*. The one city with a different pattern of responses was Woonsocket. *Carried a weapon* was the most frequently selected choice of Woonsocket youth, with *not gone out at night* second and *not gone to school* third.

Table 15: Which Of The Following Do You Think Would Prevent Kids From Joining Gangs?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number & Percentage Yes</i>						
	Providence (n = 171)	Pawtucket (n = 41)	Central Falls (n = 30)	Woonsocket (n = 30)	Cranston (n = 29)	Newport (n = 21)	Total (n = 322)
Explain dangers of gangs to kids	84 (49%)	31 (76%)	23 (77%)	20 (67%)	22 (76%)	20 (95%)	200 (62%)
Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs	74 (43%)	24 (59%)	20 (67%)	12 (40%)	19 (66%)	18 (86%)	167 (52%)
Teach kids how to solve problems without violence	73 (43%)	25 (61%)	23 (77%)	10 (33%)	15 (52%)	15 (71%)	161 (50%)
More jobs for kids	64 (37%)	21 (51%)	18 (60%)	12 (40%)	15 (52%)	18 (86%)	148 (46%)
More police patrols & surveillance	67 (39%)	18 (44%)	20 (67%)	11 (37%)	14 (48%)	12 (57%)	142 (44%)
Make neighborhoods safer so gangs aren't needed for protection	68 (40%)	21 (51%)	16 (53%)	7 (23%)	14 (48%)	16 (76%)	142 (44%)
More after-school, evening, & weekend activities for kids	62 (36%)	21 (51%)	18 (60%)	10 (33%)	15 (52%)	14 (67%)	140 (43%)
Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs	66 (39%)	19 (46%)	19 (63%)	7 (23%)	14 (48%)	14 (67%)	139 (43%)
Police & agencies reaching out to help kids with problems	57 (33%)	21 (51%)	17 (57%)	11 (37%)	12 (41%)	17 (81%)	135 (42%)
More job training for kids	63 (37%)	16 (39%)	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	16 (55%)	14 (67%)	130 (40%)
More arrests, prosecution, & punishment of gangs	58 (34%)	22 (54%)	16 (53%)	8 (27%)	12 (41%)	12 (57%)	128 (40%)
Adult mentors for kids in bad family situations	67 (39%)	18 (44%)	13 (43%)	5 (17%)	12 (41%)	11 (52%)	126 (39%)
Change schools so kids do better & don't need gang support	49 (29%)	12 (29%)	16 (53%)	5 (17%)	12 (41%)	11 (52%)	105 (33%)
Don't know	44 (26%)	6 (15%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	3 (14%)	66 (20%)
* More than 1 choice could be selected.							

The survey included a list of strategies that might prevent youth from joining gangs. Respondents were able to select as many strategies as they thought were applicable. Table 15 shows that the three strategies most frequently selected by all youth in the six cities were *explain*

dangers of gangs to kids, help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs, and teach kids how to solve problems without violence. These were also the top choices of youth respondents in each individual city, except that *more jobs for kids* was the third most frequently selected choice in Woonsocket and Newport and a co-third choice in Cranston.

Table 16: Which Of The Following Reasons Do You Think Might Cause Kids Who Belong To Gangs To Quit Their Gang?							
Response	Number & Percentage Yes						
	Providence (n = 171)	Pawtucket (n = 41)	Central Falls (n = 30)	Woonsocket (n = 30)	Cranston (n = 29)	Newport (n = 21)	Total (n = 322)
Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs	74 (43%)	25 (61%)	20 (67%)	13 (43%)	17 (59%)	16 (76%)	165 (51%)
Advice/pressure from family member or other relative	65 (38%)	18 (44%)	18 (60%)	12 (40%)	20 (69%)	14 (67%)	147 (46%)
Finding something they're really good at	62 (36%)	21 (51%)	23 (77%)	11 (37%)	17 (59%)	13 (62%)	147 (46%)
Advice/pressure from girlfriend/ boyfriend	64 (37%)	18 (44%)	23 (77%)	14 (47%)	15 (52%)	10 (48%)	144 (45%)
Going to the State Training School	68 (40%)	18 (44%)	20 (67%)	9 (30%)	15 (52%)	13 (62%)	143 (44%)
Advice/pressure from adult they respect	60 (35%)	18 (44%)	22 (73%)	10 (33%)	16 (55%)	14 (67%)	140 (43%)
Getting a job	69 (40%)	20 (49%)	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	12 (41%)	12 (57%)	137 (43%)
Getting arrested	63 (37%)	15 (37%)	21 (70%)	9 (30%)	17 (59%)	12 (57%)	137 (43%)
Getting older & losing interest in the gang	68 (40%)	16 (39%)	15 (50%)	7 (23%)	14 (48%)	14 (67%)	134 (42%)
Doing better in school	54 (32%)	16 (39%)	15 (50%)	7 (23%)	10 (35%)	12 (57%)	114 (35%)
Joining a sports or recreation program	47 (28%)	19 (46%)	15 (50%)	5 (17%)	13 (45%)	13 (62%)	112 (35%)
* More than 1 choice could be selected.							

Survey respondents were asked what reasons might cause youth to quit gangs, and were able to select as many reasons as they believed were applicable. As Table 16 displays, the reasons most frequently selected by all youth in the six cities were *hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs*, *advice/pressure from a family member or other relative*, and *finding something (positive) the gang member is really good at*. For each of the six cities except Central Falls, *hanging out with new friends who don't belong to gangs* was one of the three reasons most

frequently selected. For each of the six cities except Central Falls and Pawtucket, *advice/pressure from a family member or other relative* was also one of the top three choices. *Finding something they're really good at* was a top three choice of respondents from Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Cranston. In Providence, Central Falls, and Woonsocket, one of the three most frequently selected reasons that might cause youth to quit gangs was *advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend*. In Central Falls and Newport, *advice/pressure from an adult they respect* was one of the three most frequently selected reasons. *Getting a job* was one of the three most frequently selected reasons by respondents from Pawtucket and Woonsocket. *Getting arrested* was a top three choice of Cranston respondents, and *getting older and losing interest in the gang* was among the three most frequently selected reasons in Newport.

Table 17: Do Youth Gangs Do Any Good For Your City Such As Community Service Activities?				
<i>City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
Providence	11 (7%)	64 (43%)	74 (50%)	149 (100%)
Pawtucket	2 (5%)	26 (63%)	13 (32%)	41 (100%)
Central Falls	2 (7%)	19 (63%)	9 (30%)	30 (100%)
Woonsocket	3 (10%)	14 (47%)	13 (43%)	30 (100%)
Cranston	0	18 (62%)	11 (38%)	29 (100%)
Newport	1 (5%)	12 (57%)	8 (38%)	21 (100%)
TOTAL	19 (6%)	153 (51%)	128 (43%)	300 (100%)

Table 17 displays responses to a survey question asking respondents whether youth gangs do any good such as community service projects for their city. Approximately half (51%) of respondents from all six cities said youth gangs do not do any good. More than four out of ten respondents (43%) said they do not know whether youth gangs do any good. Only 6% of all respondents said youth gangs do engage in some positive activities. The cities with the highest percentages of survey respondents stating that youth gangs do not do any good for the community were Pawtucket and Central Falls (63% each), followed by Cranston (62%). Providence was the city with the lowest percentage of respondents stating that youth gangs do not do any good (43%). Woonsocket had the highest percentage of respondents stating that youth gangs do some good (10%).

Appendix C:

Youth Gang Survey

Rhode Island Youth Survey About Gangs - July 2001

*Developed & Administered
For The Rhode Island Justice Commission
By W. Bradley Crowther Consultants With Assistance From The National Youth Gang Center*

For purposes of this survey, a youth gang is defined as an organization of three or more juveniles who have a common identifying name, symbol, or colors, and who have common interests that include committing criminal and delinquent acts.

- 1) Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female
- 2) How old are you? Years
- 3) How would you describe your race or ethnic background?
☐ African American ☐ Hispanic
☐ American Indian ☐ Southeast Asian
☐ White ☐ Multi-Racial
☐ Other ☐ Don't Know
- 4) Do you go to school? ☐ Yes ☐ No
IF YES: Which school?
- 5) What city/town do you live in?
How long have you lived in this city/town? Years
- 6) How serious a problem do you think youth gangs are in your community?
☐ Youth gangs are a really serious problem around here.
☐ Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem around here.
☐ Youth gangs aren't much of a problem around here.
☐ Youth gangs aren't any problem around here.
☐ I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem in my community.
- 7) Do you think it's cool to be in a gang?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
- 8) Do you have friends who are gang members?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Rhode Island Youth Survey About Gangs - July 2001

*Developed & Administered
For The Rhode Island Justice Commission
By W. Bradley Crowther Consultants With Assistance From The National Youth Gang Center*

- 9) What would your friends think about you if you joined a gang?
- _____ My friends would respect me more
- _____ My friends would respect me less
- _____ It wouldn't change what my friends think about me
- _____ Not Sure
- 10) Do you think being in a gang makes it more likely you will get into trouble?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure
- 11) Do you think you are safer and have more protection if you join a gang or if you don't join a gang? *(Please check only one of the following statements.)*
- _____ I think you are safer and have more protection if you join a gang.
- _____ I think you are safer and have more protection if you don't join a gang.
- _____ I think you have the same amount of safety and protection whether you join a gang or don't join a gang.
- _____ I don't know
- 12) Are there gang members in your school?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure _____ I don't go to school
- 13) How worried are you that you might get hurt at school by gangs?
- _____ Very worried about getting hurt at school by gangs
- _____ Somewhat worried about getting hurt at school by gangs
- _____ A little worried about getting hurt at school by gangs
- _____ Not at all worried about getting hurt at school by gangs
- _____ I don't think there are any gangs at my school
- _____ I don't go to school

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- 14) Which of the following ways help you tell that someone in your community belongs to a youth gang? *(Check all that you think apply.)*

☐ Kids tell you they belong to a gang

☐ Word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs

☐ Gang signs, symbols, or graffiti, such as on kids' books, jackets, or papers

☐ Gang colors on kids' clothes, jewelry, or hair

☐ Gang tattoos on kids' bodies

☐ Gang initiations for new members at school or other places

☐ Gang handshakes or hand signals that kids use

☐ Different language, words, or phrases that kids in gangs use

☐ Other *(Please describe)* _____

☐ I don't know how to tell whether other kids belong to gangs.

- 15) Which of the following reasons do you think explain why kids in your community join youth gangs? *(Check as many reasons as you think apply.)*

☐ Youth gangs recruit members.

☐ Youth gangs pressure kids to join.

☐ Some kids start hanging out with gang members and decide to join.

☐ Some kids join because their sisters or brothers are in the gang.

☐ Some kids join because their friends are in the gang.

☐ Some kids think being in a youth gang is exciting.

☐ Some guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang.

☐ Some girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang.

☐ Some kids think being in a gang will protect them from other gangs and people.

☐ Some kids think being in a gang will cause other people to respect them more.

☐ Some kids think they will be more important if they join a gang.

☐ Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like a useful person.

☐ Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere.

☐ Some kids think joining a gang will be like joining a happy family.

☐ Some kids think they will get more money, drugs, or other things in a gang.

☐ Other *(Please describe)* _____

☐ I don't know why kids join gangs.

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- 16) Which of the following activities do you think youth gang members in your community do together? *(Check as many activities as you think apply.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Hang out on the streets	<input type="checkbox"/> Hang out at malls
<input type="checkbox"/> Go to parties	<input type="checkbox"/> Steal cars
<input type="checkbox"/> Drink beer	<input type="checkbox"/> Break into houses
<input type="checkbox"/> Cruise	<input type="checkbox"/> Steal from stores
<input type="checkbox"/> Look for girls	<input type="checkbox"/> Rob people
<input type="checkbox"/> Fight with other gangs & other people	<input type="checkbox"/> Do graffiti
<input type="checkbox"/> Do drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Do vandalism
<input type="checkbox"/> Sell drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Play sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(What?)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Do community service projects
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what youth gang members do.	

- 17) Have you ever done any of the following things because you were afraid of youth gangs? *(Please check all that apply.)*

☐ Not gone to school

☐ Not gone to parties

☐ Not gone to stores

☐ Not walked in your neighborhood

☐ Not gone to certain areas of the community

☐ Not gone out at night

☐ Not hung out with friends

☐ Not joined sports teams

☐ Not gone to recreational or other fun activities

☐ Carried a weapon *(If so, what kind?)* _____

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- 18) Which of the following do you think would help prevent kids from joining gangs? (*Check all that you think would work.*)

☐ Explain the dangers of gangs to kids

☐ Help kids learn how to say no to peer pressure to join gangs

☐ More effort by police and agencies to reach out to kids and help with their problems

☐ More police patrols and surveillance to stop gang activity

☐ More arrests, prosecution, and punishment of gang members

☐ Change schools so kids do better and are happier and don't need gangs for support

☐ Provide more after-school, evening, and weekend activities for kids

☐ Teach kids how to solve problems without using violence

☐ Make neighborhoods safer so kids don't need gangs for protection

☐ Provide more job training for kids

☐ Provide more jobs for kids

☐ Provide adult mentors for kids who are in bad family situations

☐ Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families

☐ Other (*Please describe*) _____

☐ I don't know how to prevent kids from joining gangs.

- 19) Which of the following reasons do you think might cause kids who belong to gangs to quit their gang? (*Please check all that you think apply.*)

☐ Advice/pressure from a family member or other relative

☐ Advice/pressure from a girlfriend or boyfriend

☐ Advice/pressure from an adult they respect

☐ Getting a job

☐ Joining a sports or recreation program

☐ Getting arrested

☐ Going to the State Training School

☐ Doing better in school

☐ Finding something they're really good at (music, art, etc.)

☐ Getting older and losing interest in the gang

☐ Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to a gang

☐ Other (*Please describe*) _____

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20) Do youth gangs do any good for your city such as community service activities?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ I Don't Know

IF YES:

Please give one or more examples of good things that youth gangs do for the community:

21) Other Comments/Suggestions:

Appendix D:
Law Enforcement
Gang Survey

**Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs
February 2001**

Agency Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Person Completing Survey: _____ **Phone:** _____

For purposes of this survey, a youth gang is defined as an organization of three or more juveniles who have a common identifying name, symbol, or colors, and who have common interests that include committing criminal and delinquent acts.

1) Is there a gang unit within your agency?

_____ Yes _____ No

IF YES:

How many personnel does the gang unit have? _____ Full-Time _____ Part-Time

Which of the following functions does the gang unit perform? *(Check all that apply.)*

_____ Gang prevention

_____ Gang enforcement

_____ Gang intelligence

_____ Gang prosecution

_____ Other *(Please specify)* _____

2) Do personnel in your agency receive training about youth gang-related issues?

_____ Yes _____ No

3) How do personnel in your agency learn new methods for dealing with youth gangs? *(Check all that apply.)*

_____ Presentations by other agencies visiting your agency

_____ Visits to other agencies

_____ Presentations by your agency's gang experts to other personnel in your agency

_____ Multi-agency youth gang task force meetings

_____ Attendance at conferences, seminars, workshops

_____ University courses

_____ Reading printed materials

_____ Video or audio tapes

_____ Other *(Please specify)* _____

Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs

February 2001

- 4) If your agency officially or unofficially collaborates with any of the following organizations to address youth gang issues, please check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Other law enforcement agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Social service agencies
<input type="checkbox"/> Local schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Colleges/universities
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do not collaborate with other organizations on gang issues	

- 5) Are there state laws and/or local ordinances of any of the following types that your agency uses for the specific purpose of controlling youth gangs? *(Check all that apply.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-gang law/ordinance	<input type="checkbox"/> Truancy
<input type="checkbox"/> Local curfew	<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-loitering
<input type="checkbox"/> Drinking in public	<input type="checkbox"/> Graffiti
<input type="checkbox"/> Noise ordinance	<input type="checkbox"/> Public nuisance
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> No particular laws or ordinances are specifically targeted at youth gangs	

- 6) Which if any of the following strategies does your agency use for the specific purpose of combatting youth gangs? *(Check all that apply.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Directed patrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Police-Community meetings
<input type="checkbox"/> Foot patrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Citizen crime watches
<input type="checkbox"/> Gang sweeps	<input type="checkbox"/> Satellite police stations
<input type="checkbox"/> Gang surveillance	<input type="checkbox"/> Gang intelligence gathering
<input type="checkbox"/> Gang infiltration	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential informants
<input type="checkbox"/> Gang prevention/early intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-agency coordination
<input type="checkbox"/> Engaging gangs in positive activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeting youth gang leaders
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> No particular strategies have been used to combat youth gangs.	

- 7) If you checked any anti-youth gang strategies in question 6, please list in rank order the three strategies that you believe have been most effective. *("1." is most effective.)*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

☐ We have used anti-youth gang strategies, but none have been very effective.

☐ We have not used any particular strategies to combat youth gangs.

***Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs
February 2001***

- 8) When your agency intakes a youth (e.g., new arrest, new prosecution), does your intake procedure include gathering and recording information about whether the youth is a member of a gang?
_____ Yes _____ No
- 9) How many youth gangs (*as defined at the beginning of the survey*) would you estimate are currently active in your community?
_____ Estimated Number of Active Youth Gangs _____ I Don't Know How Many
- 10) How many youth would you estimate are active members of gangs in your community?
_____ Estimated Number of Youth Gang Members _____ I Don't Know How Many
- 11) How serious a problem do you think youth gangs are in your community?
_____ Youth gangs are a really serious problem around here.
_____ Youth gangs are somewhat of a problem around here.
_____ Youth gangs aren't much of a problem around here.
_____ Youth gangs aren't any problem around here.
_____ I don't know whether youth gangs are a problem in my community.
- 12) Which of the following ways help you tell that someone in your community belongs to a youth gang? (*Check all that you think apply.*)
_____ Kids tell you they belong to a gang
_____ Word gets around that certain kids belong to certain gangs
_____ Gang signs, symbols, or graffiti, such as on kids' books, jackets, or papers
_____ Gang colors on kids' clothes, jewelry, or hair
_____ Gang tattoos on kids' bodies
_____ Gang initiations for new members at school or other places
_____ Gang handshakes or hand signals that kids use
_____ Different language, words, or phrases that kids in gangs use
_____ Other (*Please describe*) _____
_____ I don't know how to tell whether other kids belong to gangs.

Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs February 2001

- 13) Which of the following reasons do you think explain why kids in your community join youth gangs? *(Check as many reasons as you think apply.)*

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☐ Youth gangs pressure kids to join.
☐ Some kids start hanging out with gang members and decide to join.
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☐ Some kids join because their friends are in the gang.
☐ Some kids think being in a youth gang is exciting.
☐ Some guys think girls will like them more if they're in a gang.
☐ Some girls think guys will like them more if they're in a gang.
☐ Some kids think being in a gang will protect them from other gangs and people.
☐ Some kids think being in a gang will cause other people to respect them more.
☐ Some kids think they will be more important if they join a gang.
☐ Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like a useful person.
☐ Some kids think being in a gang will make them feel like they belong somewhere.
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***Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs
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☐ Teach kids how to solve problems without using violence

☐ Make neighborhoods safer so kids don't need gangs for protection

☐ Provide more job training for kids

☐ Provide more jobs for kids

☐ Provide adult mentors for kids who are in bad family situations

☐ Make family life better so kids don't turn to gangs as substitute families

☐ Other (*Please describe*) _____

☐ I don't know how to prevent kids from joining gangs.

- 16) Which of the following reasons do you think might cause kids who belong to gangs to quit their gang? (*Please check all that you think apply.*)

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☐ Advice/pressure from an adult they respect

☐ Getting a job

☐ Joining a sports or recreation program

☐ Getting arrested

☐ Going to the State Training School

☐ Doing better in school

☐ Finding something they're really good at (music, art, etc.)

☐ Getting older and losing interest in the gang

☐ Hanging out with new friends who don't belong to a gang

☐ Other (*Please describe*) _____

***Rhode Island Law Enforcement Survey About Youth Gangs
February 2001***

- 17) Do youth gangs do any good for your city such as community service activities?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ I Don't Know

IF YES:

Please give one or more examples of good things that youth gangs do for the community:

- 18) Are you aware of any social service agencies, community centers, or other organizations that have prevention, intervention, treatment, or other programs specifically targeted at youth gang members?

_____ Yes _____ No

IF YES: Please provide the names of the organizations, the names of contact persons if known, and a brief statement about the program.

- 19) Comments/Suggestions:
